ISLAMIC STUDIES

Pilot Curriculum 2020-2021
Grade 11 Stream 1

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بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيم

نٓ ۚ وَٱلْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

Nūn! [I swear] by the pen and what they inscribe! (68:1)

Salāmun ʿalaykum,

All praise is for Allah, Lord and Nurturer of the worlds. It is an honor and pleasure to address you dear teachers, administrators, educators, and parents. This āyah of the Qurʾān demonstrates the sanctity of writing. When Allah takes an oath by those who write and that which has been written, it clearly indicates that writing and books are instrumental in shaping the future generations. If we do not fulfill our responsibilities, we will be held accountable. However, if we do a proper job, Allah guarantees us a high position.

We know that Islam places great emphasis on education as a whole. After delving further, we find that education has two formats: formal and informal. Informal education entails formats such as speeches, classes, discussions, or a teacher's interactions within the classroom. Formal education refers to the standards and guidelines that teachers follow when teaching, which is usually a curriculum.

We are honored to be a part of this noble cause of developing and compiling a K-12 curriculum for Islamic Studies and Qurʾān, as well as for life skills and contemporary issues related to our daily lives. As we know, Islam is a complete way of life. Allah says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِى وَنُسُكِى وَمَحْيَاىَ وَمَمَاتِى لِلَّـهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ

Say, "Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the worlds." (6:162)

From this āyah, we deduce that Islam encompasses all areas of our lives. However, based on our limitations and circumstances this is difficult to implement in all areas of education. Full-time schools generally only allocate a few hours a week for Islamic studies. Similarly, weekend schools also only operate for a few hours once a week, over 30-34 weeks of the year.

Overall, Sunday schools and full-time Islamic schools do not yet have the capacity to adopt a system of complete integration for our children to learn Islam in conjunction with other subjects. Therefore, most schools focus on these five subjects: Qurʾān, ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, and akhlāq.

Alḥamdulillāh, Kisa Kids is pleased to present the pilot version of our Islamic Studies curriculum. The current pilot focuses on the four core subjects: ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, and akhlāq. Inshāʾ Allāh, we hope to further develop the fifth core subject, Qurʾān, in areas such as recitation, tajwīd, mafāhīm (understanding), and tafsīr and deeper understanding.

In Islamic Studies, we've had some great milestones, alḥamdulillāh. The Pre-K-6th curriculum has undergone many iterations and reached a good point. Although we had a pilot for 7th grade, based on input from different individuals, we have transferred some of the topics from 7th grade into 8th grade and added additional lessons.

The 9th-12th grade curriculum is also a compilation of different resources. Although we had created a scope and sequence and planned to develop the lessons ourselves, we ran into some unforeseen hurdles with the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this pandemic, we expedited the launch of RISE Online, a full-time online Islamic school, and Salam Online, an online weekend Islamic school platform that caters to over 250 teachers, principals, and educators across the globe, in collaboration with more than 20 schools during this pandemic era.

We have found that there is an urgent need for online resources during this time; therefore, our team of scholars, educators, and volunteers, including the Kisa Kids curriculum team and Islamic Syllabus team from Australia have created a pilot using different curricula given to us for use. Therefore, we have taken lessons from different sources: Islamic Syllabus, Kisa Kids curriculum, Madressa.net, Sirat, QFatima, and Shaykh Salim Yusufali's work, and compiled them into one pilot, by the will of Allah.

Alḥamdulillāh, with the barakah of this collaboration, we have launched this as Phase 1 of the 7-12 curriculum plan. This will be the pilot for this year, and inshāʾ Allāh, over the course of this year, we will conduct surveys and focus groups to gauge what is working and what is not working.

Based on input from educators, parents, students, and teachers we will strive to improve the curriculum for next year, inshāʾ Allāh. We humbly request all the users, principals, scholars, and students to consider the following points:

- The K-12 curriculum will have lots of errors and mistakes, as well as some ambiguities. We humbly request that you give us your input so we may make improvements, and forgive us for any shortcomings.
- Although the books entail the four core subjects, they may not have the best flow, as the material has been compiled from different curricula, so there may be some repetition in some areas and lack of information in others. Again, we humbly request your input.
- This curriculum is a pilot, not the final edition. We will accommodate suggestions to launch a final one at a later time.
- If anyone has any lesson plans, teaching methodologies, supplemental curriculum, or any additional resources, please share them with us so we can consider incorporating them into the curriculum.

- If someone is working on digital resources, such as presentations, quizzes, games, etc., please share with us via this form so we can disseminate these widely, and others may benefit as well.
- As we are moving toward digitalization, which will require a strong learning management system, we are open to feedback. We value your collaboration so we can avoid duplication, optimize our potential, and see great results, inshāʾAllāh. At the end of the day, our goal is to nurture and plant the seed of love of Qurʾān, Islam, and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) in the hearts and minds of our children in order to shape their future and attain the best in this world and the Hereafter.

For all questions, concerns, suggestions, and feedback, please contact admin@kisakids.org or admin@salamonline.education.

With Duʿās,

Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 1

Formal Arguments for the Existence of God

01 FORMAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand how the Big Bang Theory compares to the Qurʾānic description of the creation of the universe.

2. To be introduced to two presentations of the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God

MY NOTES

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Through the development of science and technology, scientists have been able to gather a lot of evidence and information about the beginning of the universe. They have used their findings to develop a theory known as the **Big Bang Theory**.

This theory explains that about 13.7 billions years ago, all the matter that makes up the universe today was concentrated into a single tiny point of unimaginable density. Following a huge explosion - or a 'big bang' - all the matter in this single entity began to expand into the huge universe we have today and it is still continuously expanding exponentially.

The Qurʾānic description of the start of the universe is in harmony with the Big Bang Theory. Allāh (SWT) says that everything in creation was once a single entity and was "torn apart" by Allāh (SWT):

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ ۖ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Did the unbelievers not realise that the heavens and the earth used to be joined together and that We ripped them apart, and that We made every living thing from water? Will they not believe? [21:30]

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The Argument from an Uncaused Cause

The basic structure of the argument:

1. Everything has a cause
2. Every cause itself has a cause
3. **But** you cannot have an infinite number of causes
4. **Therefore,** there must be an uncaused cause which causes everything to happen without being itself caused by anything
5. Such an uncaused cause is what people understand as God

ACTIVITY

In pairs, create a script for a role play between an atheist and a Muslim about the existence of God. Try to present the cosmological argument.

The argument in detail:
Scientists are not able to explain what caused the Big Bang, because it was only after the Big Bang took place that time and all the laws of science came about. Hence, it is not possible to scientifically understand or explain what took place before the explosion.

We are only able to speak philosophically, i.e. present rational arguments for the possible cause of the Big Bang. It is not possible for any physical entity to come into being without a cause. In fact, the validity of science itself is reliant on the acceptance of the law of cause and effect. If you see smoke, you know that there must be something that caused the smoke to appear.

Similarly, if you see a building, you know that there must have been a builder who created the building. The builder himself is the effect of his parents, who are the cause of his existence. The parents too are the effects of their parents. **If you keep going back in this chain of cause and effect, there must have been a first cause that itself did not require a cause.** Otherwise, the cause and effect chain would continue for infinity and nothing would have come about in the first place! Due to the fact that we exist and the universe exists, we know for sure that the chain is not infinite.

That **First Cause** (also referred to as the **Uncaused Cause**) is **Allāh (SWT)**. We know from science that both time and space came into existence after the Big Bang. Therefore, whatever caused the Big Bang must not be bound by these, i.e. must be outside of space and time. This is another reason why it is illogical to ask what "caused" or created Allāh (SWT). He is not bound by time such that something can be there "before" Him in order to create Him!

The above argument proposed for the existence of God is called the **Cosmological Argument**. Below is another version of the Cosmological Argument.

THE ARGUMENT FROM POSSIBILITY AND NECESSITY

The basic structure of the argument:
1. Individual things come into existence and then cease to exit
2. Therefore, at one time none of them were in existence
3. **But,** something comes into existence only as a result of something else that already exists
4. **Therefore**, there must be a being whose existence is necessary - that is God.

The argument in detail:
Think about a sweetened cup of tea. Sugar is something that can be described as "sweet" and sweetened tea can also be referred to as something "sweet". However, there is an important difference between the sweetness of sugar and the sweetness of the sweetened tea. If we remove the sweetness from the tea, it

DID YOU KNOW?

Sir Fred Hoyle, a renowned mathematician, remarks in his book that the chance that higher life forms might have emerged by "chance" is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.

MY NOTES

01 FORMAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

KEY POINTS

1. The Qur'ānic description of the creation of the universe is in harmony with the Big Bang Theory.

2. There are many ways of presenting the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God. Two famous ways of presenting this argument are: a) from an uncaused cause, and b) from possibility and necessity.

3. The argument from an uncaused cause: a) everything has a cause; b) every cause itself has a cause; c) **but** you cannot have an infinite number of causes; d) **therefore,** there must be an uncaused cause which causes everything to happen without being itself caused by anything; e) such an uncaused cause is what people understand as God.

4. The argument from possibility and necessity: a) individual things come into existence and then cease to exit; b) therefore, at one time none of them were in existence; c) **But**, something comes into existence only as a result of something else that already exists; d) **Therefore**, there must a being whose existence in necessary - that is God.

will still be called tea. Bitter tea is still just as much tea as sweetened tea.
The same cannot be said of sugar. Sugar minus its sweetness is not sugar. This is because sweetness is a **necessary** attribute of sugar and hence the two cannot be separated, while sweetness is not a necessary attribute of tea. The sweetness of tea, is **dependent** upon sugar being added to the tea.

A similar example can be used to understand the relationship between different **beings** and **existence**. If the relationship between a particular being and existence is **necessary**, then that being must necessarily exist. We can call such a being a "**necessary being**". Just as the relation between sweetness and sugar in a necessary one, so too the relation between a necessary being and existence is a necessary relation. It is impossible for there to ever be a time when the necessary being does not exist.

In the same way, if the relationship between a particular being and existence is **not** necessary, we can call such a being a "**dependant being**". Just as the relation between tea and sweetness is dependant rather than necessary, so too the relation between a dependant being and existence: a dependant being may or may not exist.

Human beings and all other beings in this universe are examples of dependant beings. At one point in time we did not exist. Currently, we are living in this world and we exist. The fact that we currently exist proves that a Being external to us gave us existence. This Being must be a necessary being, from which all other causes and effects - the whole chain of contingent beings - comes from. **That necessary being is Allāh (SWT) upon Whom we are totally dependent for our existence at each moment in our lives.**

IN SUMMARY

1. Explain the Big Bang Theory for the creation of the universe. How does it compare with the Qur'ānic version for the creation of the universe?
2. Why is it impossible for science to explain as a fact what took place before the Big Bang?
3. If everything in existence requires a cause for its existence, why does God not a have a cause?

ACTIVITY

Y	T	I	L	I	B	I	S	S	O	P	Z	G	Z
S	O	E	S	U	A	C	A	R	U	S	W	W	B
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T	H	T	F	J	F	O	Z	X	M	V	I	N	U
V	Y	M	R	Y	E	C	A	P	S	O	P	A	P
E	E	E	X	I	S	T	E	N	C	E	O	B	O
D	U	F	C	Y	Y	O	B	S	B	R	P	G	B
L	A	C	I	G	O	L	O	M	S	O	C	I	X
U	O	Q	L	Z	C	R	M	N	F	V	S	B	L
X	K	J	T	C	E	F	F	E	I	V	N	M	R
N	O	M	U	Y	R	A	S	S	E	C	E	N	R
D	E	S	U	A	C	N	U	V	X	E	M	I	T
C	R	U	W	Y	B	H	G	X	Q	R	S	E	I
N	M	V	T	N	E	D	N	E	P	E	D	O	F

WORD BANK:

Bigbang	Cause	Uncaused	Cosmological
Dependent	Effect	Necessary	Possibility
Existence	Time	Space	Creator

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 2

Religion and the Challenge of Athiesm

02 RELIGION & THE CHALLENGE OF ATHEISM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand why the universe could not have come about through chance

2. To be introduced to Islam's position in relation to the Theory of Evolution

MY NOTES

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

We know today that the Earth is roughly 4.54 billion years old. Scientists also estimate that living creatures existed on this planet at least 3.5 billion years ago. However, when life first started on Earth, human beings did not exist to record exactly how life began.

Charles Darwin was an English naturalist who studied variation in plants and animals during a five-year voyage around the world in the 19th century. He explained his findings in 1859 in a book called "On the Origins of Species", where he famously formulated **the theory of evolution**.

This theory states that all different species on earth originated from a common ancestry and over the course of more than 3 billion years, evolved from simple single cell life forms to the great variety of species that we have present in the world today, including human beings.

In other words, the theory proposes that fishes, lions, parrots, mosquitoes and all other living beings, including humans are all inter-related and share a common ancestor billions of years ago.

MICRO-EVOLUTION VS MACRO-EVOLUTION

The theory of evolution can be divided into two parts - **micro-evolution** and **macro -evolution**.

Micro-evolution is evolution on a small scale - **within** a single species. The theory of evolution states that evolution happens by **natural selection**:

* individuals in a species show a wide range of variation
* this variation is because of differences in their genes
* individuals with characteristics most suited to the environment are most likely to survive and reproduce
* the genes that allow these individuals to be successful are passed to their offspring
* Individuals that are poorly adapted to their environment are less likely to survive and reproduce. Given enough time, a species will gradually evolve.

The results of natural selection **within** a particular species has been witnessed. Similarly, through artificial selection, human beings have also been able to produce new varieties of characteristics within a particular species.

ACTIVITY

In pairs, create a script for a dialogue between an atheist and a Muslim discussing the extent of the validity of the theory of evolution and Islam's position on it.

For example, the following different varieties of dogs have been produced through artificial selection:

MY NOTES

Micro-evolution is a very natural process and is explainable and verifiable through science. There is no problem is accepting this idea. However, many atheists have tried to use micro-evolution as a way to "prove" **macro-evolution**. This is the idea that over millions of years, the combined effect of natural selection, environmental changes and mutations, can sometimes produce changes in organisms that are so great that **totally new species** are produced. Macro-evolution is thus proposed as the process by which all the different species have come into existence, from simple single cell beings to complex creatures like human beings.

The problem lies in the fact that macro-evolution is just a theory, which has **no** concrete evidence to prove it and it also contains numerous shortcomings. Most importantly, there is **no fossil evidence** for the theory of evolution. Darwin himself admitted that for his theory to be acceptable, there would need to have been countless creatures which were half-fish half-amphibian or half-amphibian half-bird and so on, whom he referred to as "**transitional forms**". This is why he dedicated a special chapter in his book to ask such problematic questions.

"Why if species have descended from other species by fine gradations, do we **not** everywhere see **innumerable transitional forms**? But, as by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?"
(Charles Darwin, The Origins of Species, 1st ed. p. 172)

Darwin proposed that such transitional forms would be discovered when the fossil record is inspected more carefully. It has been now been over 150 years since his book was published and despite a lot of effort to unearth evidence throughout the world, we are yet to see any evidence of any transitional forms! A famous British evolutionist, Derek Ager, thus admits:

MY NOTES

"The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find - over and over again - **not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.**"
(Derek Ager Proceedings of the British Geological Association, vol. 87, p. 133)

"If numerous species belonging to the same genera or families, have really started into life all at once, the fact would be fatal to the theory of descent with slow modification through natural selection."
(Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species, 1st ed. p. 302)

ISLAM'S POSITION ON EVOLUTION

The current scientific understanding of evolution is very minimal, especially macro -evolution, because such evolution is proposed to take place over millions of years and hence, it cannot be replicated in a laboratory, nor is there any evidence of any transitional creatures available. However, just as we cannot categorically accept this theory due to the lack of evidence available, we cannot categorically reject it either.

Evolution, as a theory, aims to describe the process through which life - **after it originated in this world** - evolved from its very basic forms, to the great variety that we have today. It does **not** explain to us how life itself began, it just provides us with a theory of how life, **after** it came on earth, diversified and evolved over time. **Evolution is not a substitute for God.**

To use an example, Isaac Newton's laws of motion may explain why and how a snooker ball moves across a snooker table. However, for the ball to actually start moving, a person is still required to hit the ball in the first place. The laws of motion are not substitutes for the player! In the same way, evolution, if proven true, might explain the process through which life evolved in this world; however, God is still required to set this process into motion.

Over time, atheists have been working hard to use Darwin's theory to "prove" that God does not exist and to show that we do not need to believe in God in order to explain how all living beings in the world came about. Those people, including countless scientists, who **do** believe in the existence of God, have been labelled as "**Creationists**" and are made to appear as choosing "religious beliefs" over "science". This has unfortunately been part of a widespread **propaganda mission** by staunch atheists to present religion as being incompatible with science. This cannot be any further from the truth. Unfortunately, such wrong ideas have now crept into the material being taught in our schools and universities.

Theoretically, Islam does not have any problems accepting that all animal life on this planet originated from a common ancestry through evolution, as this would simply be an explanation of the **process** through which God created the countless creatures we have today.

However, according to the mainstream interpretation of Qurʾānic verses discussing the creation of Prophet Ādam (A), Muslims generally reject the idea that **human beings** are also the products of evolution and that human beings evolved from apes. We believe that the first human being was a special creation of Allāh (SWT), who was individually created and placed on this planet, i.e. not through the process of evolution.

DID YOU KNOW?

Colin Patterson, a renowned palaeontologist and evolutionist, once remarked: "No one has ever produced a species by mechanisms of natural selection. No one has ever got near it and most of the current argument in neo-Darwinism is about this question."

KEY POINTS

1. The theory of evolution states that all life on earth originated from a common ancestry.

2. This theory can be divided into micro-evolution and macro-evolution.

3. There is no problem in accepting micro-evolution. However, there is no evidence available to prove macro-evolution. It is just a theory.

4. The theory of evolution does not challenge the existence of God. It just proposes an explanation for the process used by God to create diversity.

5. Muslims reject the idea that human beings evolved from apes.

IN SUMMARY

1. What is the theory of evolution?
2. What is the difference between micro-evolution and macro-evolution?
3. What is Islam's position on evolution?

ACTIVITY

PLACE THE TILES IN THE RIGHT ORDER TO REVEAL A MESSAGE

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Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 3-4

The Attributes of Allah- Knowledge and Capability

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Attributes of Allah - 'Ilm (Knowledge) and Qudrah (Capability of Allah)

Learning Objectives:
- Identify and define key attributes of Allah (knowledge and power) and the general fundamental differences between Allah's attributes and the attributes of His creation
- Compare and contrast specific attributes of Allah with the attributes of His creation
- Identify, at a basic level, information about the attributes of Allah conveyed in verses of the Qur'an and Ahadith
- Understand how knowledge of the attributes of Allah can be of assistance to a believer in real world situations

Attributes of Allah

Allah describes Himself with various attributes in the Qur'an, and the Ahlul Bayt (a) describe him with various attributes that can be found in Ahadith and Duas. In order to know and appreciate Allah more, let us become more familiar with some of the key attributes of Allah.

Before doing so, an important point: whenever we talk about Allah being described with an attribute (like knowledge), we can't compare Allah's attributes with ours. For example, take the attribute of 'Ilm, or the knowledge of Allah. Our knowledge is limited, faulty, and acquired. But Allah's knowledge is infinite and perfect compared to ours. This same concept applies to all other attributes of Allah, and is expressed in a number of verses where Allah says, "There is nothing like Him."

Knowledge of Allah

Allah's knowledge is:
- absolute and unlimited: A human being's knowledge is always limited by his circumstances and capacity. We can only know things to a certain extent. For example, we can know about the people who we can see around us, and up to a certain level. We can't read their minds. However, Allah has no such limitations.
- eternal: A human being can only know what has happened in the past and

what is happening now (to a certain extent). Allah knows what will happen in the future as well. This does not mean that He forces it to happen in that way - He knows the choices that will be made.
- not dependent on any means: A human being needs a means such as eyes or a telescope or a satellite or a microscope in order to know about things. Allah does not need any means, because His knowledge is *presential*, meaning that everything is in front of Him.
- error free: Human beings often are confident that they know something that they later find out to be untrue. Allah never errs in His knowledge.
- unchanging: The knowledge of Allah also does not cause any change in Him. This is unlike human beings who show reactions and changes depending on what they learn.

It can be very useful to be aware of the vastness and infiniteness of Allah's knowledge. Allah Himself calls us to be aware of this in various verses of the Qur'an. The Ahlul Bayt (a) also encouraged us to learn about and be aware of the extent of Allah's knowledge. For example,

He knows whatever enters into the earth and whatever emerges from it, and whatever descends from the sky and whatever ascends into it, and He is the All-merciful, the All-forgiving. (34:2)

This verse tells us that Allah's knowledge encompasses
a) whatever enters into the earth: for example the growth of a seed in the ground
b) whatever emerges from the earth: for example the growth of a plant or a flower, or the release of natural gases from the earth, or the formation of precious stones and metals that are discovered
c) whatever descends from the sky: for example rain or angels
d) whatever ascends into it: for example birds and butterflies

Say," Whether you hide what is in your hearts, or disclose it, Allah knows it, and He knows whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth; and Allah has power over all things." (3:29)

This verse tells us that Allah's knowledge encompasses
a) whatever thoughts and feelings might be in the hearts even though they are not shared with anyone else
b) whatever is in the heavens and the earth

Amir al-Mu'minin Imam Ali b. Abi Talib (peace be upon him): *"God is aware of the cries of wild animals in the mountains and deserts, the sins of His servants committed in private, the movements of fish in deep seas, and also the formation of waves by strong winds."*

This Hadith tells us that Allah's knowledge encompasses
a) The cries of wild animals that most human beings would not be able to hear (because the animals would either run away or attack them if they were present)
b) The sins committed when people imagine they are alone
c) The movements of fish in deep seas where it is so dark and cold and there is so much pressure that it would be difficult or impossible for human beings to be present
d) The complex formulation of waves in the deep oceans.

Remembering the extent of Allah's knowledge can be useful in the following circumstances:
- When tempted to commit a sin, knowing that Allah sees our actions and intentions (For example, the wife of the Azeez of Egypt, Zaleekha, who covered an idol before trying to commit her act of indecency)
- When standing for Salah or asking from Allah, knowing that He is aware of our needs
- When facing difficulties in life, knowing that He is fully aware of our struggles
- When trying to learn something new, knowing that He is the one who knows everything and is the ultimate source of all knowledge

Related to the knowledge of Allah are the attributes of Allah being the one who hears and the one who sees. The source of the 'sight' (as-Sam`) and 'hearing' (al-Basar) of Allah are His knowledge; He is aware and knows of everything that can be heard and seen. He is not however in need of organs to be able to hear and see.

Some verses that mention Allah's seeing and hearing:

Al-Hujurat (47): 18: Allah sees what you do.
Luqman (34): 28: Allah is All-hearing, and All-seeing.

When Prophet Musa (peace and blessings of Allah be upon our prophet and his family and him) was advised to go towards Firaʿun and invite him to Allah, he felt scared and worried for his family and children. He said to Allah, “O my Nurturer, who will take care of my family and children?”

Allah answered him, “Strike your staff on that rock.” Prophet Musa did as he was commanded and the rock split open. Inside the rock, there was another rock. He hit that smaller rock with his staff, and that smaller rock also split open. Inside of it, there was one more rock. Again, he hit the third rock, which also split open. Inside the third rock, there was a worm that had something in its mouth and was eating it. The spiritual veils of the unheard were removed for him, and he heard the worm say,

سبحان من يراني و يسمع كلامي و يعرف مكاني و يذكرني و لا ينساني

“Free from defect is the One who hears my words and knows where I am, and Who remembers me and does not forget me.”

By showing Prophet Musa this amazing sight, Allah taught him that He takes care of everyone, and he should move forward with performing his duties and relying on Allah. This little worm lived very deep in a rock. As it prayed to Allah, it had certainty that even from this small, dark place, Allah would hear him because one of Allah’s titles is “As-Sameeʿ,” the All-Hearing. (Source of this story: Kisa Kids Islamic Studies curriculum)

Capability of Allah

Another attribute of Allah is His Qudrah, or power / ability / capability. Allah is ‘Al-Qadeer’, the All-powerful, also known as the Almighty and the Omnipotent Being.

Qudrah refers to one’s ability to perform what he/she desires. Allah is perfectly able to do whatever He pleases, and is not limited in any way in accomplishing what He desires. He is not in need of anything in order to do what He wants, unlike human beings who need energy which is provided by other sources.

In many verses of the Qur’an, Allah says, ‘Allah is capable of everything’ or in other words, ‘Allah has power over everything.’

Omnipotence Paradox

One of the objections that has been brought against Allah being All-Powerful is known as the 'Omnipotence Paradox'. The objection is phrased in different ways, but a common form is the following: If Allah has power over everything, can He create something that He cannot lift?

A similar question is: Can He create a being that He cannot destroy?

These questions appear to create a 'paradox', where neither can we answer yes or no.
If we answer yes, then it shows that Allah is limited in His ability, because He would not be able to lift something or destroy something.
If we answer no, it once again shows that Allah is limited in His ability, because He would be unable to create some things.
People have tried to therefore doubt that Allah is capable of everything by using this paradox, because in either case it shows that Allah is not capable of everything.

Response to the Omnipotence Paradox

There are concepts that can be imagined in our minds but in the real world, they are 'incoherent', meaning that they *cannot* exist. For example, we can imagine the concept of a square that is a circle, but we can't actually ever picture such a concept, because it *cannot* exist. Such a thing is called 'incoherent'. The reason why such a concept can never exist is because of the law of contradiction, which states that both *A* and *not A* cannot both exist at the same time. The proof of this law of contradiction is self-evident, meaning that anyone and everyone knows this to be true.

Based on this law of contradiction, something that is too heavy for Allah to lift is also contradictory, because it means that something that was created and is needy of Allah is also not needy of Allah, because something that is 'too heavy for Allah to lift' would be needless of Allah providing it existence. Therefore something that is too heavy for Allah to lift is incoherent.

Similarly, a being that Allah cannot destroy would be a second Needless, Necessary being, and we have proven that it is impossible for there to be more

than one Necessary being. So such a being is also incoherent.

The statement that Allah is capable of everything means that Allah is capable over everything that is in the realm of possibility and is coherent. Incoherent things are contradictory and infeasible and they are not worthy of consideration when discussing Allah's power.

The following example may help in understanding this concept. Imagine there is a talented painter whom you approach to paint a painting, but you don't provide him/her with any paint, and there is no paint to be found anywhere in the city. The painter is still talented and capable of painting, but not without the necessary tools and accessories. Allah is capable of doing anything, as long as that 'thing' is in the realm of possibility.

Once, a man asked Imam Ali (a), 'Can Allah cause the entire earth to fit into an egg, without shrinking the world or enlarging the egg?' Imam Ali (a) responded, 'Weakness can never be attributed to Allah, and what you ask about is not to be' meaning that it is something that is incoherent.

In summary, Allah is capable of everything that is a 'thing', meaning it is feasible, coherent, and worthy of consideration, not a concept which is incoherent.

Benefits of Understanding and Contemplating the Power of Allah

Knowing and pondering upon the fact that Allah is Almighty has incredible benefits, such as:
- Never feeling that is one is alone or abandoned, because if such a thought comes to mind, we can remember that a) Allah knows about us and is b) capable of solving our problems.
- Not being impressed by the worldly power amassed by enemies of Allah, because ultimately Allah's power reigns over them
- Never giving up hope or thinking our efforts are futile, because as long as we are striving for truth, we should know that we are working in the direction that Allah desires, and Allah has promised that He will make the truth prevail
- Not being impressed with our own efforts, because we attribute the power that we have to the Ultimate source of power. Whatever good we do is from Allah.

One of the 'adhkaar' (pl. of dhikr) that the Ahlul Bayt (a) have taught us to say which reminds us of the power of Allah is the dhikr of 'laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah', meaning 'there is no power or might except by Allah'.

Review Questions

1. Make a table with two columns: Knowledge of Human Beings and Knowledge of Allah. Then, in each row of the table, list different aspects of how the knowledge of Allah is incomparably greater than the knowledge of a human being.

2. Pick one part of a verse or Hadith that mentions the knowledge of Allah and explain how one can benefit from understanding this verse / Hadith.

3. Name two practical benefits of knowing that Allah is Seeing and Hearing.

4. What does 'qudrah' and 'al-Qadeer' mean?

5. Give two ways in which the power / ability of Allah differs from the power / ability of human beings.

6. What is a paradox? Why does the question, "Can Allah cause the entire earth to fit into an egg, without shrinking the world or enlarging the egg?" bring up a paradox?

7. What is the answer to the Omnipotence Paradox?

8. Look at a translation of Dua al-Jawshan al-Kabeer. From it, copy down one line that relates to Allah's knowledge and another that relates to Allah's power.

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 5

The Justice of God- Differences in Creation

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Understanding the Wisdom behind Differences in Creation

Learning Objectives:
- Understand how the presence of evil and differences in creation can be a source of people questioning Allah's justice
- Give reasons as to why such differences do not contradict Allah's justice
- Apply the reasons given to real-life scenarios where people would otherwise doubt Allah's justice

We know that Allah is al-Hakeem, meaning that all of His actions are on the basis of wisdom. But in looking at the world around us, we can see things that may, at first, seem to be unfair and contrary to Allah's wisdom. Previously, we learnt about some of the reasons for how we can explain such things. **Discuss:** What are some reasons for the presence of evil?

We've learned that sometimes, we prematurely judge an event that takes place as 'unfair', because of our imperfect knowledge, and not seeing the hidden benefit in it.

One of the questions brought as a challenge to Allah's justice has to do with the presence of differences. Every being is not given the same as others. Some plants and animals have multiple colours whereas others are a single colour. Animals can move and communicate with each other whereas plants are sedentary. Through the use of their advanced thinking, human beings are superior to all the other beings.

Among human beings, there are differences as well. **Discuss:** What are ways in which human beings are different from one another? Some examples are:
- Different ages
- Different genders
- Different colours of skin
- Different physical features
- Different personality types
- Different roles and positions
- Different levels of athletic ability
- Different levels of learning
- Different levels of wealth / poverty

Without thinking over the matter carefully, we could easily assume that such differences are unfair. Many times people look at others and say, "It's not fair that so-and-so is like that but I'm like this." But actually, these differences *are* compatible with the justice of Allah, for the following reasons:

1. **There is a difference between justice and equality.** Justice means giving everyone what he / she deserves, not giving everyone the same. In some matters, Allah gives according to the level of one's effort. In general, students who try harder in high school will end up being placed in better universities. In general, those who regularly exercise and maintain a balanced, healthy diet will be more physically fit than those who don't. In such cases, it is more fair and just for those who try harder to get more, because they deserve it.

2. **Allah creates some differences because of the different responsibilities that beings need to fulfill.** Part of the job of a plant is to produce oxygen, and it needs leaves in order to do so. An animal will not have leaves because the job of an animal is different. Human beings have a responsibility to lead a life of servitude, and in order to do so, they have been given the ability to reason (called the *Aql*) far beyond the ability of other beings.

In a family and a society, people need to complement each other in order to be able to help one another achieve the purpose for what they have been created. If all members of a society had exactly the same skill set, would they be complementary to each other?

Discuss: Imagine a community consisting of one or limited type of skills, like a hospital with only doctors, or a village with only bakers. Would such a community be able to survive?

Discuss: What are some of the potential ways in which injustice can take place in a community that has people who have different levels of skills and capabilities. Given that Allah is Just, how can the presence of such injustice be understood?

Allah says, "…It is We who have dispensed among them their livelihood in the present life, and raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may take others into service…" (Az-Zukhruf 43:32) This verse describes how Allah

intentionally places people in different places in the society, not so that they can be exploited, but rather so that the society can run harmoniously.

3. **Some differences are a means of being tested**. Allah created human beings so they can be tested. One of the ways He tests us is to give to some and to not give to others. Such a test can reveal the level of our patience, self-control, and faith in the decision of Allah. (Example: One of the great Maraaji', Marhum Ayatullah Gulpaygani, said that he went to visit one of his old friends who was on his deathbed. When Ayatullah Gulpaygani arrived, his friend opened his eyes and said, "See how much of a Dhaalim (wrongdoer) Allah is! We were both students together and we used to study under the same teacher, Abdul Karim al-Haeri. We were both educated. But you reached to this level and became a Marja', while I didn't arrive at any position!" After saying that, he died.

Discuss: What was the test that this man faced? Did he pass or fail it? What did that reveal about the purpose behind the difference?

4. **A blessing for one can be a curse for another.** A knife is an essential tool for a chef, but is dangerous in the hands of a child. Similarly, the steering of an airplane is to be done by a qualified pilot, while giving it to someone else would be disastrous. Sometimes, out of Allah's mercy He will withhold a blessing from someone because He knows this blessing would cause that person to stray from the path of servitude.

5. **Some differences are imagined and imposed by human beings, not Allah.** Real differences are different than imagined differences. For example, Allah created us with different skin colours. This is a real difference. However, the colour of one's skin is not meant to be an advantage or a disadvantage. But in some societies, people imagine that white skin is better than black skin, and impose a system that supports this idea. A government can have discriminatory policies that favour some races and prevent others from achieving.

Similarly, some believe that the rich are more important than the poor, or that males are more important than females, but these are false beliefs imagined by some people and not taught by the prophets or their successors.

6. **Allah is fair, and will judge people according to what He has given**

them and how much effort they put in. According to a Hadith reported from Imam as-Sadiq (Al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 602), there will be three books / records presented on the Day of Judgment. One is a book of blessings. The other is a book of good deeds, and the third is a book of evil deeds. That means that the extent of one's blessings will factor into one's accounting. More will be expected from those who had more blessings.

Review Questions

1. How can the content of this lesson help a believer who feels bad that some of the people around them are more athletic or have better looks?
2. Can you use reason #2 to explain why, within an Islamic household, Allah places different responsibilities on a father and mother?
3. Provide an example (other than those given) of how a blessing for one can be a curse for another.
4. For reason #1, what if someone puts in a lot of effort into something but doesn't achieve what he/she is looking for? How can that be explained given that Allah is Just?

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 6-8

Worldviews, Religion and Spirituality

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 6: Worldviews

Learning Objectives:
- Be familiar with the different ways of seeking knowledge
- Understand what a worldview is, and how worldviews are related to the acceptance / denial of way of seeking knowledge
- Compare and contrast different worldviews, with a special emphasis on the secular vs. rational worldview, and apply these world views to trends seen among Muslims today

Dialogue with Jack, an Atheist

Jack: All I know about is what I see, feel, hear, touch,… anything that I can sense. Anything other than that, I don't know about. God, and this religion that you talk about, has to do with things I can't see, feel, etc., therefore I can't know about him or the religion you say that your god asked you to follow, so what's the point of discussing any further?

Means of Understanding the World Around Us

1- Five senses: A baby will see his / her mother, father, smell different scents, hear the noises around him / her, and as his / her senses develop, he/she will come to know more and more about the world around.

2- Intellect: By reasoning about those things that we know, we come to understand things that we don't know. For example, we know that everything that comes to be, must have something that made it come to be. So when, for example, astronomers see a group of rock formations in the solar system move in a certain pattern, they realize there must be a cause for that special movement, such as the presence of a ninth planet.

3- Inspiration and Revelation: There are certain individuals who gain an understanding of the world around them due to their inner purity (taqwa). These individuals have either been prophets, or others who were non prophets. The inspiration given to prophets is called 'wahy'. The inspiration given to non-prophets is called 'ilhaam'. The qur'an gives us examples of prophets and non-prophets who received inspiration. For example, Maryam

(a), the mother of Nabi Isa, and the mother of Nabi Musa (a) both receive inspiration at key moments in their lives due to their inner purity. In recent times, we have examples of people like 'Karbalaee Kadhim' who understood Qur'an and could read it without having any prior learning. He received this knowledge because of his diligence in paying his 'zakaat' and being careful about not mixing haraam and halal. He had a miraculous ability of being able to see the verses of the Qur'an as light and he would be able to distinguish between verses of the Qur'an and other words that weren't Qur'an because of the light that emanates from the verses of the Qur'an. See https://youtu.be/vyQz5-oMqvk for a short film about Karbalai Kazim and https://youtu.be/amMXsUi6Ea0 for a speech by Ayatullah Nasir Makarim Shirazi about him.

(If the atheist at this point says I don't understand therefore I reject, our answer is: if you don't understand something, it doesn't mean that it's wrong - it's something you don't have the right to pass a judgment on. Just because you don't understand it, it doesn't mean that it's illogical - things that are illogical are those that you can reject).

Different 'Worldviews'

A 'worldview' is a view of the world that is formed on the basis of how we come to understand the world around us. This term is wider in scope that 'religion' because there can be people who have no religion but still have a worldview (like atheists who have a secular worldview) and there can be people who have a religion (like Islam or Christianity) but have a secular worldview (like a secular Muslim).

(**Discuss**: Compare and contrast the term 'religious perspective' and 'worldview').

1. Secular / materialistic worldview: A worldview that depends on knowing the world purely on the bases of the senses.

2. Blind religious worldview: A worldview that depends on believing what someone (like a prophet or an inspired figure) says just because the person (or his / her book) says it.

3. Rational worldview: A worldview that depends on knowing the world based

on the senses + the intellect.

Analysis of the above world views:

1. Secular / materialistic worldview:
a) This world doesn't have an origin or an end beyond the material. Whatever there is and will be, is contained in the physical world itself. It's like a page or pages ripped out of a book without an introduction or conclusion.
b) We human beings, and other beings that exist, were created by something that has neither intellect nor awareness nor feelings. We were created by 'Mother Earth' which in reality isn't at all like a Mother.
c) There is no ultimate purpose behind why we are here. That means that whatever purpose or goal we create for ourselves is limited to this world itself. That means that the only purpose we have is to a) enjoy the world around us as much as possible b) profit from this world as much as possible. This perspective has serious consequences. For example, if someone is not able to enjoy the world that much, or he/she is not profiting from the world, then there isn't a point to living anymore, and this can lead to suicidal thoughts, depression, or addiction (drugs / alcohol). Another example is that someone who is elderly or sick is encouraged to end his / her life as soon as possible because there is no point in living when suffering.
d) Success and failure depend on how much you enjoy the material world and how much you have of it.
e) The standard for what is right and wrong is self-centered; you can easily justify harming others or even killing them if your own ability to enjoy the world and to acquire the world depends on doing so. Example: colonialism and neocolonialism.
f) There is no hereafter beyond this world.
g) Religion and the people who brought it are the causes of regression. People who follow religion are considered to be backwards.
h) Rather than having five principles of faith, the only principle of faith is 'life of this world'.

Analysis:
- If what we know is limited to what we sense, what we know is going to be very limited, because:
a) Sometimes, we can lack a sense. For example, there are people who lack the ability to see, hear, etc.
b) What we sense is limited. For example, until now no one has spotted Planet

Nine. Every moment that passes, there are many sound waves we can't hear, colours that we can't see, areas of outer space we are clueless about, etc.
c) Many times our senses can make a mistake. Scientists have identified at least 800 examples where our senses trick us into believing something which is false. Examples: mirage, full moon is larger when on the horizon, the colours of the dress social media phenomenon, old woman vs. young woman picture. If you build a building on shaky foundations, the building is not going to be sturdy and well founded.
d) There are certain fundamental questions that we would like to answer that we can't answer correctly or fully by just relying on our senses (we can just come up with a guess but not know for sure):

1) Where did we come from?

2) What purpose are we here for, and how do we accomplish that purpose?

3) What happens to us after we die?

2. Blind religious worldview

This is the type of worldview adopted by zealous, Bible-toting literalist Christians, fervent Zionist Jews, and even Muslims who may value tradition over religion (and choose Haram over Halal just because that's what an 'inspired' cultural figure told them), or Muslims who adopt a very literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith texts and disregard what the intellect says (like Wahhabis or Takfiri 'Shias'). Even Catholicism which states that you have to have 'faith' in the trinity - don't try to resolve the fundamental logical conflict that 3 does not equal 1, and don't seek a logical explanation for it the trinity - just believe! - would fall into this category.

The problem with this worldview is that it is based on blind following. If I reach the conclusion that I need to follow whatever a prophet says based on logical grounds, then this is not a problem. So for example, for Muslims to say, "I submit to whatever Prophet Muhammad (s) commands" is perfectly okay, as long as they understand at a logical level why he needs to be obeyed. But if they don't have that logical understanding, their worldview will be shaky, and at the slightest opportunity, they will disregard it and adopt a different worldview. This is the problem with many Muslims today.

3. Rational worldview

This worldview is the correct worldview to adopt. Under this worldview, the fundamental basis of how we understand the world is the intellect. We have to know 'why' we believe what we believe. However, once we accept something logically, our logic can tell us to submit and believe what lies beyond, because there is only so much that we can understand. For example, we can logically establish the existence of God, the need for a prophet, the prophethood of the Prophet (s), and the miracle of the Qur'an. Then, when the Qur'an commands us to fast for a month out of the year, we don't need a logical proof for why we should do so - we can just submit.

Conclusion

So, in answer to the atheist, we would say that his problem is in his worldview - if he is open to widening his worldview, God and religion will take on meaning.

Questions for Review

1. Explain how someone can be practicing a religion but still have a "blind religious worldview."

2. Give an example of a religious ritual that a person who has a secular worldview would find meaningless. Then give an example of a ritual that a person who has a secular worldview would find meaningful.

3. Does someone who holds a rational worldview have to understand the reason behind everything he/she believes in?

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 7: Origins of Religion

Learning Objectives:
- Explain the Islamic theory about the history of religions.
- Identify the two main ways in which the enemies of the prophets corrupted the teachings of the prophets.
- When presented with information about modern day sects and splinter groups with Islam, apply what was learned in this lesson to recognize the nature of the deviation from the original message of the Prophet (s).

Atheist: When did religions begin?

Answer: There are different theories that people who study religion from a historical perspective have given for an answer to this question. However, Muslims believe that religion - and the worldview that comes with it - began with the very first human being, who was the prophet Adam (a). Throughout history, every messenger has explained the religion and worldview that human beings should have. It has been the same core message from the beginning:
1) belief in one and only God who created us and sustains us
2) belief in the prophets and the message they bring to us as a way of life
3) belief in the hereafter being our ultimate destination

Due to specific circumstances of a particular time and place, sometimes the laws and ritual differed, but the core message was always the same.

However, throughout history, there were people who opposed the message of the prophets, and tried to corrupt this message in different ways due to their selfish interests. For example, the Qur'an mentions that there were rabbis who misrepresented what the Torah said, and explained laws incorrectly in order to get profit from the people. There were two major ways in which the enemies of the God and the enemies of the prophets changed the religion given by the prophets:

1) They tried to make religion into something that focuses exclusively on the relationship of people to God. They took out that portion of religion which focuses on the relationship of people to people, and that explains how we

were are supposed to live as communities and societies in a way that allows us to reach true success. (Note to the teacher: good place to have a discussion on what implications this has on society - meaning what happens when you take away politics and governance away from religion). The message given by the prophets was comprehensive and a complete system of guidance for how we can live in the most successful way. Naturally this included guidance on how to raise families, how to educate, how to balance gender roles, how to organize in communities and societies, how to defend against enemies, how to run an economy and avoid interest, etc. But the enemies mixed a secular worldview into the religion so that people would go away from the prophets' message in these areas. (Note to the teacher: ask students why the enemies of the prophets wanted to do this? Answer: this was in their own personal interests. For example, the Pharaoh would have been okay with Nabi Musa telling people how to pray but he was not okay with Nabi Musa telling his people to resist oppression and that the correct government is led by the prophet).

2) They tried to make religion into something that is just a set of rites and rituals without having real significance. Examples include empty rituals practiced in Christian mass, Wahabbi's focus on the outward rituals while missing the bigger picture of obeying and worshipping Allah, not wealth and human power exhibited by the family of Saud.

Throughout history, because of these deviations, Allah has sent messenger after messenger to provide the correct teachings and to advance the system of guidance. This was until Islam, which is the complete and perfect religion that is protected by means of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt (a).

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 8: Religion vs. Spirituality

Learning Objectives:
- Understand typical characteristics of a "spiritual-but-not-religious" person
- Identify the root cause from this movement in the modern day lifestyle, and why instead of turning to religion, such individuals turn to a personal, individual spirituality
- Explain the Islamic perspective on spirituality

Imaginary Dialogue between a Muslim and a Modern-day "Spiritual" person

Judy: It seems that you are a person who is committed to a religion. My parents raised me as a practicing Catholic but I've moved beyond religion. I'm now a spiritual person.

Muslim: What do you mean when you say you're spiritual but not religious?

Judy: Well, I love to do yoga and meditate, and that makes me feel spiritually connected.

Muslim: Why did you move away from religion?

Judy: For me, I found religion to be:

a) Outdated and limited: The major religions of the world

came a long time ago and were meant for specific people. Times have changed since then and I need something that is compatible with a modern lifestyle in the Western world.
b) Not pluralistic enough: After moving into my dorm in university, I met a great group of friends who are all spiritual but in their own ways. Some listen to wild music, others beat drums when it rains, and one of them even twirls round and round muttering something repeatedly. A few of them find their solace in drugs…I know, they shouldn't be doing that, but they are so…spiritually inspiring. Religion boxes you into one way of doing things.
c) Impossible to understand: There are so many people who interpret every religion in a bunch of different ways - conservative, liberal, orthodox, fundamentalist, modern, revisionist…there's no way of saying who's right and wrong!
d) Too "in the future": I'm part of the Instagram generation and I need things done instantly. You can't tell me to follow certain practices so that I get rewarded at an unspecified time in the future way after I die! Modern life is so fast paced and challenging, I need to have a spiritual connection right here and now.

But that's what I think - I don't want to impose my thinking on you. If your religion works for you, that's great.

Questions based on the dialogue above (Note to teacher: Prompt students to come up with the answers to these questions. There are key lessons to be learned in answering these questions, and students will be responsible for knowing them.)

Why does Judy use the expression “moving beyond” religion? Answer: Because she sees it as outdated.
If asked, how would she likely define “feeling spiritual”? Answer: Feeling a happy and peaceful feeling inside that lets her go beyond the material world that surrounds her.
Why does she feel that religion boxes you into doing things? Answer: Because she sees that what she is seeking can be achieved through different approaches.
What was the main reason why Judy needs her spirituality? Answer: the challenges of modern life leave her feeling empty.
Why does modern life make someone feel the need to connect to something beyond the material world? Answer: Because advancement in technology and the modern lifestyle that has come along with it have been focused only on our material needs. A human being consists of a body and a soul. Meeting the needs of the body while ignoring the soul can lead to great disappointment in life, depression, and a feeling of worthlessness.
Why did she pick yoga and meditation as her means of being spiritual? Answer: Because those appealed to her more as opposed to the Catholic practices that she grew up practicing.
Why does she say she doesn’t want to impose her thinking on the Muslim? Answer: Because she believes in spiritual pluralism.

Potential Response a Muslim could give

Muslim: Thank you for sharing. I have a different perspective. Actually, true spirituality is to be found only in religion!

Judy: What do you mean by "true" spirituality? Is there something like false spirituality?

Muslim: Yes! Religion is a path that is meant to give someone access to the hidden world. Islam teaches us that the material world around is known as the dunya, and it is the lowest of worlds. Beyond this realm there are other spiritual realms. In order to access those realms, and eventually come to know Allah, or God, or the One who possesses ultimate beauty and perfection, we need a path, and that path is religion.

There are other things someone can do to feel good inside, like the things you and your "spiritual" friends do. But many of these forms are a temporary means of escaping from reality. They don't give an understanding to fundamental questions like why are we here, what is our goal, and how do we get there. The problem with those forms of "spirituality" are that you yourselves are the ones who choose what is right for you. Imagine that we all were on a plane that had to do an emergency landing in the middle of a snowy land. After we get out of the plane, the captain announces, "Let's get moving! We have to run in order to survive! Just run!" And then everyone just starts to run in any direction. Some may fall into a crevice, and others may be injured for not knowing the path. Yet others may think they are going in the

right direction but they are actually running in the opposite direction from a safe haven!

You said yourself that some of your friends do drugs, and that's wrong. There are others in the world who commit unjustified acts of violence or have indecent, immoral relationships as a way of attaining spirituality - surely those can't be right either!

True religion teaches us a way to embrace the reality of this world and shows us the correct and safe way to interact this world and worship God to enter the spiritual realms. In religion, it's not the individual who chooses what's best, but rather the Creator.

Judy: Well, theoretically that sounds good…but practically there is no religion that I can turn to for spirituality, because of all the flaws I mentioned earlier!

Muslim: It seems that many of your problems stem from a lack of knowledge about Islam. Islam is the last and most complete system of guidance from Allah. It is a religion which spans all times and places, for which Allah sent a Book, the Qur'an, that is free from error, along with guides to preserve, explain, and exemplify the teachings of the Book.

Islam teaches us that the acts we perform, and even our intentions and thoughts, have an immediate impact on our soul. Someone who performs righteous deeds and stays away from evil deeds for the sake of Allah will access true

spirituality, right here and now — although they will see the true results of their actions in the hereafter. Allah says, "Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life…" (16:97). "Look! The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance!" (13:28).

If there is a Muslim who doesn't feel spiritually connected, the problem doesn't lie with Islam, but rather it is a flaw in the Muslim him/herself. The best of Muslims, who were the Prophet Muhammad (s) and the Ahlul Bayt (a), are the best examples we know of truly spiritual people. They had the deepest connection to Allah and the spiritual world, but yet they were practical and knew the best way to live in this world.

Questions for Review

1. Is it possible to be "spiritual" but not religious?

2. There are different religions and within different religions there are different sects and/or schools of thought. Is there any way of saying what is really right and wrong?

3. In religion, who chooses what someone needs to do in order to enter the spiritual realms? In spirituality without religion, who makes this decision?

4. Why has the typical lifestyle in the modern era led to more depression and unhappiness?

————————For teachers only————————

Answer Key

1. It depends on how you define "spirituality." If spirituality is feeling good inside, then yes there are a lot of things you can do to feel spiritual that don't have to with religion. But according to Islamic teachings, true spirituality is not about just feeling good inside, or temporarily escaping from reality. True spirituality, or contentment of the soul, can be found by performing righteous deeds and staying away from evil deeds for the sake of Allah.

2. Yes! The way to know what is right and wrong is by using logic. If a religious argument is based on logically sound premises, then it can be accepted. But if it involves bypassing logic and believing "just because", then it can't be accepted. The religion of Islam, in particular the Shi'a school of thought, is based on five principles (the Usul ad-Deen) that are based on logic.

3. In religion, it is God who chooses the path to the spirituality and the higher realms. But in spirituality without religion, it is the individual who chooses what makes him/her feel good.

4. Because advancement in technology and the modern lifestyle that has come along with it have been focused only on our material needs. A human being consists of a body and

a soul. Meeting the needs of the body while ignoring the soul can lead to great disappointment in life, depression, and a feeling of worthlessness.

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 9-13

Frequently Asked Questions about Islam

Lesson 9: Is Truth Subjective?

Question:

I was listening to a speaker who claims: *"Truth is a subjective thing, I have never personally believed that the Shi'a are the truth. The truth is a subjective thing that everyone arrives at in their own capacity as individuals, communities or a humanity in large. The truth is available for Shi'a, Sunni, Hindu as one body…"*.

He also argued that *"the Qur'an only makes a distinction between 'friends of God' and 'enemy of God', it does not care if you are a Muslim, Christian, Jew or Sabian. Whenever these verses of the Qur'an are mentioned, it does not mention Prophet Muhammad, or Prophet Musa, or Prophet Isa, it only mentions Allah, the Hereafter, and the righteous good deeds."*

Dear Sheikh! I am a convert and I had to put up with a lot from my family for being a Shi'a Muslim. I wonder if it was all necessary. Please give me a complete answer as the above argument has confused many of us.

Answer:

Thank you for your queries. It is always healthy and safe to cross examine the information we receive to scrutinize their validity, especially when they are related to our faith.

The above argument stems from a very old philosophical argument about the reality of 'truth' and I will try to explain it in simple language.

The dogma of subjective or relative truth as opposed to objective or absolute truth is full of contradictions, and hence is nothing more than a fallacious argument as I will explain:

1. If truth is essentially subjective and relative then this proposition 'truth is a subjective thing' is not necessarily true, which means it may be false. Thus, it is self-defeating.

2. We ask those who claim "truth is a subjective thing that everyone arrives at in their own capacity as individuals..", is this an absolute statement, or it may or may not be true? If it is an absolute statement then there is an absolute truth which is against your claim. But if your statement is also relatively true then you may well be telling me a lie!

3. How did you come to the conclusion that truth is subjective and relative? If all propositions are subjective, then yours must be included too! Thus, you are unconsciously acknowledging the absolute truth.

4. Logically the best a holder of 'subjective truth' may claim is to say 'I am agnostic' (I have no knowledge of the truth). The Holy Qur'an refers such ignorant people to 'those who know': "Ask those who know if you do not know." (Surah 16, Ayah 43).

5. If 'truth is available for all', then both atheists and theists must be true. This claim contradicts the most basic human foundation of knowledge, i.e. the Law of Non-contradiction, which simply means 'A is not non-A. Here, an atheist believes God does not exist, whereas a theist believes God does exist. To claim that truth is available to both of them contradicts the Law of Non-contradiction.

6. Similarly if 'truth is available for all', then both Christians who believe Jesus is Son of God, and Muslims who believe Jesus is not son of God must be true. Likewise, Christians who believe Jesus was crucified, and Muslims who believe he was not crucified must be both true! And the list goes on. This is a clear violation of the Law of Non-contradiction.

7. If 'truth is available to all', then all the criminals such as ISIS must be true too. They have reached the truth in their own capacity!! Similarly, it should have been available to both the holy Prophet of Islam (s), and the pagans of Quraysh, both Imam Ali (a.s.) and his opponents must have arrived to it, both Imam Husain (a.s.) and the perpetrators of Karbala must have arrived at truth in their own capacities too!

8. If 'truth is available to all' then why did God bother to dispatch all the Prophets and Messengers, and why did He create hell and heaven and the Day of Judgment in the first place?!

9. Finally, Avicenna proposed a great test to examine the validity of 'subjective truth'. Send him on the top of a high cliff, and if he believes he can fly he should be able to fly, since truth is subject to his belief! But if he falls instead of flying then the argument is over!

10. As for the claim that 'the Qur'an only makes a distinction between friends of God and His enemies', is there any application or real examples for these titles?! The Almighty God introduces Himself as 'The Only Truth': "That is because Allah is the Only Truth, and what they (polytheists) invoke besides Him, is falsehood." (Surah 22, Ayah 62). Out testimony of Faith first denounces any deity and then proclaims Allah as the one and only deity worthy of worship: "*La Elaha Ellallah"*. According to 'subjective truth' the divine division of 'truth and falsehood' must be absurd!

11. If 'God does not care if you are a Muslim, Christian, Jew or Sabian', then why did He reveal: "Surely, they have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah, son of Mary… Surely disbelievers are those who said: God is the third of the three…" (Surah 5, Ayah 72, 73).

12. If 'God does not care if you are a Muslim, Christian…" then why did He order his noble Messenger to take his noblest family members to attend the event of al-Mubahalah (two parties standing off and invoking God's curse upon the false party)?! (Surah 3, Ayah 61). Couldn't He just reveal to His Messenger: "I don't care how you believe in Me, or perhaps don't believe in Me. I love you all"?!

13. Is it not bizarre to claim that God cares “only about belief in Allah, the Hereafter, and righteous good deeds, and belief in the Prophets, and in particular the Seal of the Prophets is unnecessary”! This is not less than denying the Message and the Messenger! Unless you believe in the Prophet of Islam (s), the Holy Qur’an will not be a divine revelation for you. Now I know why it is recommended to recite the following Ayah after every prayer: “The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers, (they say): We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers – and they say: We hear and we obey. We seek Your forgiveness, our Lord and to You is the return of all.” (Surah 2, Ayah 285).

14. As for his word: “, I have never personally believed that the Shi’a are the truth.” Well, please compare this with what the holy Prophet (s) has said to Imam Ali (a.s.): “You are with the Truth, and the Truth is with you.” (Ibn Asaker, vol. 20 p. 361). Imam Hadi (a.s.) also says in his visitation for Imam Ali (a.s.): “O Commander of the Faithful! I bear witness that whoever doubts you has never believed in the Trusted Messenger (i.e. Muhammad), and whoever leaves you to choose another (as his leader) has indeed diverted the true religion that the Lord of the worlds has chosen for us.” (al-Mazar, p.66).

15. And finally, if:

· The Prophets (s) were pluralists then none of them would have suffered or been tortured to death. They would have coexisted happily with all the pagans of their times!

· The holy Prophet of Islam (s) was a pluralist, then he would not have opposed the pagans and Hamza, the noble uncle of the Prophet (s) and many other Muslims, would have not been killed.

· The holy Prophet (s) was a pluralist then he would not have sent letters of invitation to the then world leaders, and Ja’far – ‘the owner of Two Wings’ – would have not been killed by the Romans…

· Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was a pluralist he would not have opposed Abu-Hanifa for applying analogy in the matter of jurisprudence.

· Imam Ridha (a.s.) was a pluralist he would have not debated the leaders of all religions in the court of Ma’moon, and the list goes on!

May the Almighty Allah keep us all on the Right Path, the path of those whom He has blessed, not those who earned the divine chastisement nor of those who went astray. “O Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and we follow the Messenger (Muhammad), so write us down

with those who bear witness. Our Lord! Make not our hearts to deviate after You have guided us aright.

Answered by: Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

Lesson 10: Is Islam a Violent Religion?

Q1: Does Islam believe in Religious Coexistence and Social Harmony?

Islam definitely teaches religious co-existence and social harmony. In order to establish a peaceful religious coexistence in society Islam has suggested four principles:

1. No Compulsion in Religion

No doubt, there are different factors involved in forming people's opinions and faiths. The physical structure and the organic compounds, time, place, diet, education and so many other factors have inevitable effects on people's faiths. Thus, the healthy way to change their opinion is to encounter them from their origins. Utilising force and compulsion not only cannot change the hearts of people, but it may in many instances increase hatred and animosity.

To this end, the Holy Quran clearly denounces the use of the force in terms of religion. It is ultimately the right of people to choose any religion they are happy with, and the duty of the Prophets is not more than educating people and reminding them of the right path. They have never been authorised to force people to the Truth.The following Ayaat are the examples of many:

1/1: ***"Let there be no compulsion in religion; Truth stands clear from error."*** 2:256

1/2: ***"If it had been the Lord's Will, all who are on earth would have believed. Will you then compel mankind against their will to believe?!"*** 10:99

1/3: ***"Say, the Truth is from your Lord, let him who will believe, and let him who will reject."*** 18:29

2. Logical Debate and Discussion

Islam whilst respecting other religions and beliefs, may disagree with some of their teachings, finding them illogical, and hence invites their adherents to open discussion and debate in a peaceful and logical manner far from any type of fanaticism and prejudice.

The following Ayat are the examples of this approach:

2/2: ***"Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them inways that are best and most gracious."*** 16:125

3. Divine Religions, Grades of one School

Therefore, despite the followers of other religions who consider themselves the chosen nation and the only saved ones, Islam considers all of the divine religions as different grades of the one school. From the Islamic point of view each new divine religion has been the upgraded version of the previous one, prescribed to complete its teachings.

3/4: ***"Those who believe (in Islam) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."*** 2:62

4. The Principle of Righteousness and Justice

"Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for Allah loves those who are just." 60:8

Question 2:

Why is Sharia law so violent, like stoning, cutting of hands, and lashing? This is why many people stay away from Islam, I thought Islam was a religion of forgiveness, why is it that our Sharia law has so many physically harmful ways of punishment? Isn't imprisonment enough?

Answer:

The wisdom behind Islamic criminal laws is more of prevention and protection of community's security rather than executing a punishment. Thus, although Islamic retributions sound violent, in practice Islam has set forth rigorous requirements to prove a crime. For example, theoretically the punishment of adultery (زنا المحصنة is illegal sex committed by a person – male or female- who is permanently married) is stoning, however, to prove the crime either four just male eye witnesses must be present together before the judge to testify that they witnessed the actual fornication and their testimony is exactly the same – if only three just male eye witnesses appear before the court and offer their testimony they will be held liable to punishment-, another way to prove a crime is if the suspect appears before the court on four different occasions and willingly confesses the crime. Even if one of the parties involved confesses the crime the law will be executed only on him/her.

Punishment for theft is another example. Theoretically its punishment is amputation of the right four fingers – administered under anesthetics. However, the law will not be executed unless about 15 conditions are met. For example, the law will not be executed during a famine if the stolen item is a necessity of life, or if the thief repents before the case is brought before a judge, the case will be dismissed, etc.

Studying the practice of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s) leaves us with no doubt that the criminal laws have been only executed as the very last resort when all other preventing factors fail. The Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s) would let go of a case once the signs of regret would appear or when there would be any doubt about the certainty of an accusation. It is narrated from the holy Prophet (P): "Dismiss a punishment when there is a doubt." (al-Faqih, vol. 4, p.74).

The following story is a prime example of the Islamic approach towards the execution of a crime.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrated: "A man appeared before Imam Ali (a.s) while he was with his companions, confessing: O Amirul-Mo'meneen I have slept with aboy (i.e homosexuality), please purify me. The Imam said to him: Go back home, I'm afraid you have lost your sanity. The next day the same man appeared before the Imam with the same confession, and Imam gave him the same reply. It was until when he appeared before the Imam for the fourth time that the Imam replied: How would you like to be punished? The man said: in the most severe way. The Imam said: that is to burn by fire. He said: I choose that. He then offered two Rak'at prayers and in his Qonoot said: "O Allah! I've committed a capital sin and I am concerned about its consequences. O Allah! I came to the successor and the cousin of your Prophet to purify me, and I've chosen the most severe punishment. O Allah! I beg you to access this as my retribution and do not burn me

in the Hell-Fire in the hereafter. He then finished his prayer and stepped into the punishing pitch while he was crying. Observing the scene ImamAli (a.s) and his companions were all in tears. Then the Imam said to the man: Come out! Indeed you made the angels of heaven and earth cry for you. Lo! Allah has forgiven you, but never do such things again." (al-Kaafi 7:202).

Answered by: Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

Lesson 11: Frequently Asked Questions about the Life of Prophet Muhammad (saw)

Q1: Why did the Prophet (s.a.w) marry several wives?

Question:

I have read that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, had a total of 12 wives, out of which 9 were alive at the time of his death. What was the reason for this?

What I understand is that a man is allowed to marry once in Islam, yet depending on the highly unlikely criteria laid down in the Quran (relating to justice between wives), he may marry up to four women (if he can keep justice between them).

But why was the Prophet allowed to marry more than the maximum of 4 even?

Answer:

In the old days, there was generally no government social benefits and services, and thus, women and children were financially looked after by men who were then the main bread-providers. This would become more essential when we consider the number of wars that were imposed on early Muslims, the result of which would be obviously many orphans and widows without any supporters.

In order to meet the needs of this vulnerable part of society, Islam permits and often encourages polygany.

Note Ayah 3 in Surat Nisa that allows polygyny is preceded by the rights of orphans. In other words, the Almighty God first reminds the believers of the rights of orphans as the most vulnerable part of society, and then deals with the second; i.e. widows. In short, the message of Ayahs 2 & 3 of Surat Nisa to the believing men is:

1. to encourage the community to bring orphans to their homes and look after them like their own children.

2. to bring orphans with their mothers to their homes by marrying widows so that they too can enjoy a life with a father/husband.

3. at least marrying one woman (whether widow or not) to take their bear minimum social responsibilities.

The meaning of justice here also is to be fair in providing food, clothing and other maintenance.

Now, let's look at the life of the holy Prophet of Islam (s). Up until 10 months after his migration to Madina, he had only one wife i.e. Khadija. In fact, she dies in the year 9 of his mission while he was still in Makka, but he never married anyone until 4 yrs later in Madina, when he married Aesha.

Then from the 3rd yr A.H. and after the battle of Uhod, which imposed many casualties on Muslims, his holiness married ام سلمة(Umm Salamah), whose husband was martyred in Uhod.

Then he married ام حبيبه (Umm Habeebah) whose husband عبيدالله (Ubaydallah) had died in Ethiopia.

Then Zainab whose husband was also martyred in Uhod.

Then Sooda whose husband had died after their migration to Madina.

Then Hafsa the daughter of Omar, who had married twice before and didn't have much chance for any more marriages.

Then Safiya, whose husband was killed in the battle of Khaibar.

And the list continues…

Most of these women had children too, and the holy Prophet of Islam as the head of the community was looking after all of them compassionately. If there was any lust behind his practice of polygyny, he would have naturally had some children from all of these women- given the lack of family control facilities in those days. Yet, the only one he had a child from- apart from Khadija – was ماريه (Mariha), who was a female slave gifted to the Prophet (s) by the then king of Egypt. She gave birth to a son for the Prophet (s) called Ibrahim, who unfortunately died at the age of 2.

The world must really admire the lifestyle of the holy Prophet of Islam, who in spite of his heavy social duty as the head of state, had the most ideal family life too. A man who at one time had 9

families to look after and yet never divorced any of them. This by itself is one of his miraculous characteristics.

It was due to this outstanding nobility and ability that the Almighty God exceptionally allowed him to marry up to 9 women at one time.

Q2: WAS PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S MARRIAGE TO AISHA A PEDOPHILIC RELATIONSHIP?

Question:

A friend of mine is very anti-Islam and has a very negative attitude towards Islam and Muslims. One of his arguments is about the age of Aisha, one of the Prophet's wives. He says that she was only 9 years old when the Prophet Muhammad married her, while he was much older, and hence this was a pedophilic relationship (God forbid).
What can be said about this?

Answer:

Please consider the following points in reply to the above allegations and accusations:

1. Women have traditionally married at younger ages than men, although the average age of marriage has increased for both sexes with time.

2. If Prophet's marriage to a 9 year old girl is pedophilia then the history of western countries has recorded a lot of pedophilic relations. Margaret Beaufort (mother of Henry VII of England) was married to John de la Pole at the age of 7 in 1450. Likewise, Anne de Mowbray, 8th Countess of Norfolk, was married to Richard of Shrewsbury, the first Duke of York at the age of 6 in 1477. Also, Margarethe of Austria; the daughter of Emperor Maximilian I, was not even 3 years old

when she became the fiancée of the French Crown prince Charles! And the list goes on.

3. Historically girls were married at a much younger age than nowadays. Such marriages were more proxy marriages and the girl would be betrothed with the consent of her father.
4. As for the age of Aisha – the wife of the holy Prophet Muhammad (s) – at the time of her marriage, unlike the common mistake, she was most likely around 17 years of age for the following reasons:

a. Historians asserted that her older sister 'Asma' was 10 years older than her (Ibn Katheer, vol.8 p.345). Asma was born 25 years before the migration of the holy Prophet (s). That means her younger sister in the year of the Prophet's migration was 15 years old.

b. Bukhari (vol. 3, pl. 3606) quoted from Aisha that she was engaged to the holy Prophet (s) 3 years after the demise of his first wife 'Khadija', which is the first year of his migration, when Aisha was 15 years old. The holy Prophet (s) married Aisha two years later when Aisha would be 17 years of age.

Lesson 12-13: Common Questions Regarding Shia Beliefs

Q1: DID THE PROPHET (S) REALLY SAY THERE WILL BE 12 CALIPHS AFTER HIM? SUNNI REFERENCES?

Question:

Is it true that there is a hadith from the Holy Prophet(s) that he said that there will be 12 caliphs or rulers after him? If it does exist, is it authentic, and does it exist in both Shia and Sunni books of narration?

Please provide me with some of the main Sunni references if possible. Also, what do Sunni Muslims say about this hadith if it exists in their books?

Answer:

The famous Prophetic narrations of '12 Caliphs' or '12 Emirs' are mentioned in many books of Hadith including Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim:

يَكُونُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَمِيرًا – فَقَالَ كَلِمَةً لَمْ أَسْمَعْهَا فَقَالَ أَبِى إِنَّهُ قَالَ – كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ.
Jaber Ibn Samorah said I went to the Prophet (P) and I heard him saying: "*There will be 12 Emirs*"- then the Prophet (P) said something that I did not hear so I asked my father about it and he said, the Prophet (P) added: "*they are all from Qoraysh.*" (Bukhari, Hadith No. 7222).

إِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ لَا يَنْقَضِى حَتَّى يَمْضِىَ :عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ قَالَ دَخَلْتُ مَعَ أَبِى عَلَى النَّبِىِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُول
فَقُلْتُ لِأَبِى : مَا قَالَ ؟ قَالَ : كُلُّهُمْ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ : فِيهِمْ اثْنَا عَشَرَ خَلِيفَةً . قَالَ : ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلَامٍ خَفِىَ عَلَىَّ . قَالَ.
Jaber Ibn Samorah said I went to the Prophet (P) and I heard him saying: "Indeed this matter will not be completed until there will be 12 Caliphs amongst them." He then added something softly that I did not hear, so I asked my father about it who said: The Prophet (P) said: "They are all from Qoraysh." (Muslim, Hadith No. 1821, Book of leadership).

The above narration has been one of the most mysterious narrations for Sunni scholars. Al-Nawawi; the most famous interpreter of Sahih Muslim, who while quoting from many scholars regarding the meaning of the abovementioned Hadith, quotes from al-Qadi A'yadh who suggested:

و يحتمل أن يكون المراد مستحقى الخلافة العادلين ، وقد مضى منهم من عُلم ، ولا بد مِن تمام هذا العدد قبل قيام الساعة
"And it is possible that it is meant for those just people who deserve the Caliphate, and some of them who are known have already passed and the rest must come before the Resurrection Day." (Sharh Muslim vol.12 p.202)

Ibn Kathir; the famous Sunni Imam of Hadith and historian says:

ومعنى هذا الحديث البشارة بوجود اثني عشر خليفة صالحًا ، يقيم الحق ويعدل فيهم ، ولا يلزم من هذا تواليهم وتتابع أيامهم ، بل قد وجد منهم أربعة على نَسَق ، وهم الخلفاء الأربعة: أبو بكر ، وعمر ، وعثمان ، وعلي ، رضي الله عنهم ، ومنهم عمر بن عبد العزيز بلا شك عند الأئمة ، وبعض بني العباس ، والظاهر أن منهم المهدي. ولا تقوم الساعة حتى تكون ولايتهم لا محالة ، المبشر به في الأحاديث الواردة بذكره

"This Hadith is a glad tiding that there will be 12 righteous Caliphs (after the holy Prophet), who will establish truth and justice. However, it does not necessarily mean they should lead one after the other! Thus among them it could be undoubtedly Omar Ibn Abdul-Aziz, and some of the Abbasid kings! (In any event), the Resurrection Day will not happen until they (the 12 Caliphs) undoubtedly rule. And apparently al-Mahdi; whose glad tiding has been mentioned in many narrations is one of them!" (Tafsir Ibn Katheer, vol.3, p.65).

Ibn Hajar; the author of Fathul-Bari, whose book is celebrated as one of the best interpretations of Sahih Bukhari, while quoting from al-Mohallab says:

لم ألق أحدا يقطع في هذا الحديث يعني بشيء معين

"I have not met anyone who could be certain about the meaning of this Hadith!" (Fathul-Bari, vol. 13, p.211)

Similarly, Ibn Jouzi; the renowned Hanbali scholar confesses:

هذا الحديث قد أطلت البحث عنه، وتطلّبت مظانّه، وسألت عنه، فما رأيت أحدا وقع على المقصود به

"I have researched for long to understand this Hadith and referred to many references and made much enquiries about it, yet I did not meet anyone who could understand it." (Kashful-Majhool, vol.1 p.449)

Likewise, Ibn Taymiyya says:

ومنهم من قال: لا أفهم معناه كأبي بكر بن العربي

"Among them (scholars) are those like Abi-Bakr Bin Arabi who said: "I do not understand the meaning of the Hadith!" (Menhaju-Sunna, vol. 8 p.173)

Are Bani Umayyad from the tribe of Qoraysh?

In an attempt to complete the number 12, many of the Sunni scholars insist on including some of the Umayyad kings.

This argument is very futile for many reasons:

1. The Umayyad kings were more than twenty!

2. The Caliphs of the holy Prophet (P) have to be the most pious and righteous Muslims. Would they regard the cursed Yazid as one of the Caliphs of the holy Prophet?! Would Marwan Ibn Hakam, who was explicitly cursed by the Prophet (P), be another caliph of the Messenger of Allah?!

3. The holy Prophet (P) foretold that his twelve Caliphs are from the tribe of Quraysh. Although it is famously taken for granted that the Umayyad are from the tribe of Quraysh, the fact is otherwise:

– Bukhari narrated that when the holy Prophet (P) was distributing the share of the 'Near of the kin' he refused to give any share to the children of Abd-Shams (Umayyad), as well as the children of Noufil. He only distributed them amongst the children of Hashim and Mottalib. When Uthman Ibn Affan (known as the 3rd caliph, and who was from Umayyad family) and Jobair Ibn Mot'em (who was from Bani Noufil) complained, the holy Prophet (P) said: "Only the Children of Hashim and the Children of Mottalib are one family." (Bukhari, vol. 5, p.79).
– Umayya; the grandfather of the Umayyads, was an adopted child of Abd-Sham, not a biological child. Imam Ali (a.s), in one of his letters to Mo'awiyah with reference to this fact writes:

و أما قولک انا بنوعبدمناف، فکذلک نحن ولکن
لیس أمیۀ کهاشم، ولا حرب کعبدالمطلب و لا ابوسفیان کأبی طالب و لا المهاجر کالطلیق، و لا الصریح کاللصی

"And as to what you said that you are from the children of Abd Manaf, then so are we. However, Umayyah is not like Hashim (in virtue and biological relation), and nor is Harb like Abdul-Mottalib, neither is Abu-Sofyan like Abu-Talib. Also, the one who willingly migrated (in)to Islam is not the same as the one who was freed, just as the one who is biologically related is not the same as the one who is adopted." (Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No.17)

When Imam Ali (a.s) heard that his opponents claimed the caliphate with the excuse that they are from Quraysh he said: "How strange! They referred to the tree but ignored its fruit!" (Bani-Hashim is a branch of Quraysh.)

The Twelve Caliphs or Emirs are the Twelve Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s)

There is no sect in Islam other than us, the Twelvers (Shi'a), who by the Grace of God believe in twelve leaders after the holy Prophet (P), all of whom are from his Noble Family. Thus, the

Prophetic Hadith that the renowned Sunni scholars could not make any meaning of, is so well understood, even by our children.

The 12 Imams are:

1. Imam Ali
2. Imam Hasan
3. Imam Husain
4. Imam Ali Ibn Husain al-Sajjad
5. Imam Muhammad Ibn Ali al-Baqir
6. Imam Ja'far Ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq
7. Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far al-Kadhem
8. Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Reda
9. Imam Muhammad Ibn Ali al-Jawad
10. Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Hadi
11. Imam Hasan Ibn Ali al-Askari
12. The promised Imam Muhammad Ibn Hassan al-Mahdi

Peace be upon them all.

Note how the holy Prophet (P) in his famous Hadith of Thaqalayn has referred to his noble family as one of the two types of Caliphs he has left behind:

Zaid Ibn Thabit narrated from the Messenger of Allah (P): "Surely, I leave behind two Caliphs for you: the Book of Allah, a linked rope between heaven and earth, and my noble family, and truly these two will not be separated until they return to me at the Pool (of Kauthar)." (Kanzul-Ummal, vol. 1, p.44).

Q2: DID THE PROPHET (S) APPOINT A SUCCESSOR? (PROVE FROM HOLY QURAN AND HADITH)

Question:

Did the Holy Prophet (s) of Islam appoint anyone to succeed him in the matter of leading and guiding the Ummah after his demise? Many Muslims, especially Sunnis, argue that the Holy Prophet(s) did not appoint anyone to take his position after his demise. Is this true? Please provide proofs from the holy Quran and reliable Hadiths.

Answer:

1. Al-Masoudi; the famous historian narrated that all the previous Prophets had successors. Seth succeeded Adam, Ishmael succeeded Abraham, Joseph succeeded Jacob, Aaron and then Joshua succeeded Moses. Simon succeeded Jesus. Who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad in the matter of leading and guiding the Ummah after the demise of the Prophet (P)?

2. It is an indisputable fact that Abu-Bakr appointed Omar to succeed him (Sahih Muslim p.1455), and so did Omar for Othman although indirectly. Similarly, Mo'awiya appointed his vicious son; Yazid, out of his concern for the Ummah of the Prophet (P)! Then is it possible that the Prophet of Islam (P) had no concern about the future of his Ummah?!

3. Whenever the Prophet (P) left Madina he used to appoint someone to be in charge of the affairs of Muslims. For instance, He appointed Imam Ali (a.s) when he left Madina for the Battle of Tabouk ((Bukhari 4:1602). He was also appointing leaders for different tribes and towns such as Ta'ef, Yemen, etc. Is it possible that he did not appoint any leader for the Ummah to succeed him after his demise?!

Surely he did appoint a successor and that was none other than Imam Ali (a.s). The Shia' provide three different proofs for this belief:

1. The Holy Quran:

There are a number of Ayat in the Holy Quran which prove the doctrine of Imamat as a divine selection:

1/1: *"Verily, your guardian is (none else but) God and His Messenger (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish Prayers and pay the charity while they be (even) bowing down (in Prayers)."* (5: 55).
The commentators of the Quran unanimously agreed that the Aya was revealed to the Prophet regarding Imam Ali, that whilst he was in Prayers, he offered his ring to a beggar.

1/2: *"O Messenger! Proclaim what has been sent to you from your Lord, and if you did not, then (it will be as if) you would not have fulfilled His message." (5:67).*
The Ayah under consideration is one of the most powerful Ayat proving the Imamat of Imam Ali as the successor of the Prophet, and hence, I would like to draw your attention to the following main notes:

a) Chapter five of the Quran is the last chapter revealed to the Prophet of Islam. Therefore, its rules are not subject to any changing.

b) The Ayah seems to be regarding the most important issue in Islam that, if it is not delivered to the people, the whole message of Islam is not delivered.

c) 'Al-Ghadir', written by the Late Amini, is a masterpiece in 11 volumes which deals thoroughly with the above Ayah. The author has collected the quotation of more than 100 companions of the Prophet, that the Ayah had been revealed on the occasion of Ghadir in which the Prophet appointed Imam Ali as his Successor.

2. The Hadith

Hadith, or the words of the Prophet, is the second proof of Shiites that Imamat is a divine appointment and not an election. There are so many Hadiths from which the leadership of Imam Ali as appointed by the Prophet can be proven. The following are a few of many:

2/1: Hadith of Welayat:

Abu-Es-Haq in his Commentary of the Quran quoted from Abu-Dhar that: *"One day a poor person came to the Mosque asking for help. Nobody helped him except Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Although he was praying, he did not hesitate to help the poor person. He pointed at his ring offering it to the poor man. The man accepted the ring and pulled it off of Ali's finger. Upon that, the Prophet raised up his hands and said: 'O my Lord! Increase my tolerance, ease my task for me… and give me a Minister from my family, Ali, my brother.' "(*1).

As soon as the Prophet finished his supplication, the angel Gabriel descended to the Prophet with Ayah 55 of Chapter 5 of the Quran as mentioned above (2).

2/2: Hadith of Ghadir:

The Hadith is related to the second Aya mentioned in the last meeting. The Aya was revealed on the 18th of Thil-Hajjah in a place called Ghadir of Khom. The Prophet performed his pilgrimage to Hajj which happened to be his final Hajj performance in the year 9 AH. On the way back from Mecca, whilst being followed by hundreds of Muslim pilgrims, Gabriel came to him with Ayah 67 of Chapter 5. Upon the revelation, the Prophet ordered the caravans to stop around a pool named Ghadir of Khom. It was announced that the Prophet had a very important message to deliver.

The crowd surrounded the Prophet getting prepared to listen to his sermon. The Messenger of God delivered a sermon pointing out many important issues. When the sermon was nearly over he asked people if the Prophet's guardianship on them is more than that of themselves? "Of course", cried the crowd. Then the Prophet raised up the hand of Ali Ibn Abu Talib saying: *"Whoever I am his/her master, this Ali is his/her master. O God! Love those who love him, and have enmity on those who have enmity on him. Help those who will help him and leave alone those who will leave him alone.."*

After the sermon was over, the Prophet asked people to come and greet Imam Ali as 'The Commander of the Believers'. Abu Bakr and Omar were among the first who came to Ali and greeted him saying: 'Congratulations Ali! You've become our Master and the Master of the Believers'(3).

Al-Ghadir in the Book of Muslim

Muslim, in his Saheeh in the chapter of The Virtues of Imam Ali has quoted the story briefly. He quotes from some narrators who had met Zaid Ibn Arqam, a companion of the Prophet.

– "O Zaid! You have met a lot of fortunes. You met the Prophet. You heard his words. You fought with him. You prayed behind him. Such a blessed person you are. Please, tell us some of what you heard from the Prophet."

– Zaid: "O friends! By God, I'm old and near to death. I've forgotten some of what I've heard from the Prophet. So, if you insist, just accept whatever I may tell you and do not force me to tell you more."

– Then he said: "One day, the Prophet stood up to give us a lecture at a pool named Khom. He said : 'O you people! Verily, I am a human who soon will answer the message of his Lord (I will die soon). However, I will leave two precious things with you. The first is the Book of Allah which contains Guidance and Light. Hold the Book and keep it firm.' Zaid added: And the Prophet persuaded people to the Quran. Then he continued: 'and my family, I remind you Allah in my Family, I remind you Allah in my Family, I remind you Allah in my Family.'(4)"

Notes:

1. It is clear that Muslim has summarized the Hadith.
2. The Hadith mentioned by Zaid must be of great significance, or he would have chosen something else.
3. The contents of the conversation between Zaid and the narrators is vividly the best proof that Zaid was not allowed to openly speak about the virtues of Imam Ali.
4. After all, the Hadith is dealing with Imam Ali, reason being, even the author Muslim has quoted the Hadith in the chapter of the Virtues of Imam Ali, despite the fact that his name is not explicitly mentioned in the Hadith.

2/3: Hadith of Manzelat:

It is quoted from the Holy Prophet on a number of occasions to have said about Imam Ali: *"You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except there is no Prophet after me." (*5). As we already mentioned, the Quran is introducing Haroon to us as the Successor of Moses and the Messenger

after him. The Prophet has omitted the second type of relation, i.e. the Prophet-hood and confirmed the Succession.

3. Unique Qualifications

Surely, when Allah selects one of His devotees as a Prophet or the successor of a Prophet, He only so chooses because of their unique qualifications. ” (Allah) said: My Covenant includes not the Zalimeen.” [2:124]. No one in the world could be compared with the unique qualifications that God bestowed upon the pure Family of the Prophet. The following are some examples of the preference of Imam Ali (a.s) over all other companions of the Prophet (P):

1. Faith: *“Is then he who is a believer like him who is a Fasiq (disbeliever)? Not equal are they”. [32:18].*
Imam Ali (a.s) never prostrated before any idol, whilst Abu-Bakr, Omar and Othman indisputably have been all worshipping idols sometimes in their lives. Eight years had passed since the rise of Islam and Omar was still an idolater! Even after embracing Islam, on various occasions, he questioned if the Prophet of Muhammad (P) was really a Messenger of God?! [For instance see Ibn Hisham, vol.3 p.331].

2. Knowledge: *“Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not?”[39:9].*
Imam Ali (a.s) was the Gate of the City of the Prophetic knowledge. But Omar did not even know the meaning of ‘Abb’ (80:31). Even Ayasha was more learned about the Hadith of the Prophet (P) than Omar [Bukhari, the Book of Jana’ez].

3. Jihad: *“Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit.” [4:95].*
Indisputably again Imam Ali (a.s) was the bravest knight of Islam in all the battles. Imam Ali (a.s) was the one *“who would sell his life seeking the Pleasure of God” [2:207]* by sleeping in the bed of the Prophet (P). During the battle of Ohod, Imam Ali (a.s) was among a very few people who stood fast around the Prophet (P) whilst Abubakr, Omar, and many others had fled the battle. The successful combat of Imam Ali (a.s) against Amr in the battle of Ahzab was equal to the worshipping of mankind and the jinn. And the list goes on. But prior to the peace treaty of hodaybiya, the Prophet (P) asked Omar to enter Makka and inform them that Muslims are not here for fight, his reply was: “Indeed, I am scared of Qoraysh about myself.” [Ibn Hisham 3:329].

Alas!

Had the divine word of the Prophet regarding Imamat not been neglected, the Islamic Ummah today and throughout history would have had a different destiny. When in the beginning, the ordinary Muslims were allowed to carry the title of ‘The Commander of the Believers’, then, in less than one century after the appearance of Islam, tipplers carry the title too! The so called Commander of the Believers puts his clothes on his slave girl to lead the pray for the believers at a Mosque!!

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Footnotes:

(1): The Prophet has abstracted the phrase from the story of Moses mentioned in the Quran 20:25-32.
(2): For further references see: Al-Kashaf 1:649, Tabari 6:288, Qortobi 6:219, Al-Dorol-Manthour 2:293.
(3): Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Mosnad: 4:372
(4): Muslim 7:122
(5): Muslim 7:120; Bokhari, Chapter of Virtues of Imam Ali.

Q3: WHAT IS THE SHIA VIEW ON SUNNI HADITH BOOKS LIKE 'SAHIH BUKHARI' & 'SAHIH MUSLIM'?

Question:

What is the Shia view on the Sunni hadith compilation books such as 'Sahih Bukhari' and 'Sahih Muslim'? What makes them 'not Sahih' (unauthentic) in the Shia view and how authentic are the hadiths within them considered?

Answer:

As you know, there are two major sources of information for Muslims. The first is the Holy Qur'an, on which all Muslims agree. The second is the Sunna, which includes the words, actions and confirmations of the Prophet (pbuh). Unfortunately, Muslims disagree greatly when it comes to the Sunna of the Prophet (pbuh). The Shia have their own books, while the Sunnis have other books and the narrations in the books differ greatly.

When we come to a narration about something the Prophet did or said, we need to analyse it to see whether it is true or not. One of the most important ways of analysing a narration is to look at the people who narrated it. The science of studying the life and trustworthiness of these narrators is called 'ilmul rijal (narratological biography). Each narration has a chain of narrators, which begins at the Prophet (pbuh), then comes to his companion who lived at the same time as him and heard from the Prophet himself and then to the person he told that narration to and so on, until that narration reached one of our scholars who compiled it in one of the books of narrations which we still have today. When we want to know whether a narration is true or not, one of the best things we can do is to look at the names of all the people in the chain of narration and see what history says about them. Were they trustworthy and reliable narrators or not?

This is where the difference between the sects occurs. Each sect considers different people trustworthy and so differences occur.

The authors of Sunni Sihah (authentic books for Sunnis) have very often narrated from people who were known for their hatred and enmity for Ahlul-Bayt (a.s). Such people undoubtedly are sinners and their narrations should not be accepted. The following are only a few examples:

1. Abu-Horaira. He converted to Islam only about 20 months prior to the demise of the HolyProphet of Islam (p), yet, Sunnis have narrated over 5000 narrations from him, but only 58 narrations from Imam Ali (a.s) who had lived with the Prophet (P) from his childhood! Isn't this strange?! Bukhari even narrated a Hadith from Abu-Horira that he has confessed it's his fabrication! (Bukhari, vol.6 p.190, the Book of Nafaqat, chapter 1)

2. Umran Ibn Hattan: He was the head of al-Khawarij. His praising poem for Ibn Moljam who assassinated Imam Ali (P) is very famous. Yet, Bukhari very often narrated from him.

3. Umar Ibn Sa'd; the chief of the army of Yazid in Karbala.

4. Hariz Ibn Uthman: He would not leave the mosque after his prayers until he curses Imam Ali (a.s) 70 times! Ismaeil Ibn Ayyash narrated: "I accompanied Hariz from Egypt to Makkah. On the way he kept cursing Ali Ibn Abi-Tali (a.s). I said to him: How can you curse someone about whom the Prophet (P) has said: "You are to me as Aaron to Moses." He (shamelessly) said: the narrator has misheard th eProphet. He had said: You are to me as Qaroon to Moses!!! Yet, Bukhari, Termethi, Nasaei and others have narrated from him.

The other major difference is that the Shia believe that there is no book of Hadith which is 100% authentic, and that all hadiths must be checked against the Qur'an and the established principles of Islam. In contrast, Sunnis believe that certain books, such as Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, are 100% correct and unquestionable. These books, however, obviously contain some Hadiths which go firmly against the principles of Islam and cannot be justified in any way, and therefore their claim is proven false through the content of the books themselves.

USING NARRATIONS FROM ABU HORAYRAH & OTHER SUNNI NARRATORS

Question:

Due to my interest in 'Practical Irfan', and the fact that I hear of so many great scholars having studied the works of Khwaja Abdullah al-Ansari, I purchased a copy of the book "Stations of the Wayfarers" which has the Arabic with English translation. The book is published through a non-

Shia organisation and I noticed that in the first chapter of the book Sheikh al-Ansari quotes from people such as Abu Horayrah.

I checked the Arabic text and even though my Arabic is very limited, I can see that in my copy his name is mentioned on several occasions. I have to say that this made me very disappointed and confused.

I have heard that one cannot travel successfully towards Allah (swt) without Ahlul Bayt (as). But I'm not sure how to equate someone with the reputation of Khwaja Al-Ansari as being a follower of Abu Horayrah.

I am aware that Sunnis say Khwaja Al-Ansari was a follower of their school of thought, but I find it hard to believe that our great scholars would traverse their path towards Allah (swt) under the guidance of someone who holds Abu Horayrah in such high regard. What is your take on this?

Answer:

First of all thank you very much for your question and may God bless you for your inquiry. In fact, your question is a very valid and common question. Please consider the following points:

1. A mere narration from Abu Horayrah is not an issue. Many of our great scholars have often quoted Prophetic narrations through Abu Horayrah. For example, you'll see many narrations in the books of Sheikh Al-Sadooq through Abu Horayrah. There is no doubt that he was one of the fabricators (of hadith), but that does not mean all his narrations are fabricated. Therefore, on principle the famous opinion among our scholars is that it is permissible to quote from him and other Sunni narrators on moral issues or any issue that is not contrary to our beliefs. Thus, selective narration from him and similar narrators is a common practice among our Shi'a scholars. For example, the Hadith that Khawaja Abdullah narrated in the introduction of his book through Abu Horayrah is mentioned by Shi'a scholars too. Seyyed Ali Khan al-Madani (one of our eminent scholars in the 12th Century A.H) has quoted the Hadith in his explanation of 'al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah', as Imam Sajjad (a.s) in his 3rd supplication refers to the Hadith.
2. Khwaja Abdullah al-Ansari lived in a predominately Sunni area, and as such, it seems he naturally appears as a Sunni scholar. However, I made quite a comprehensive research some years ago on his books and found his theological opinions very similar in many instances with the Shi'a view. For example, his stance on 'determinism or freewill' is exactly what the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s) have instructed. In fact, he has written a book against the theological views of both the 'al-Ash'ari & al-Mo'tazeli' (the only two ancient Sunni theological schools). Thus, some of our scholars have suggested that he was a Shi'a practicing Taqiyah!

3. Although there is no literature from him on Imamat or jurisprudential issues in order for us to determine his school of thought, I personally find it difficult to accept that he was a Shi'a -at

least in the meaning we understand today. There are parts in 'Manazelu-Saerin' (a book by Khwaja Abdullah) that are more compatible with the Sunni belief, such as his views on some of the Prophets in Station 50, notwithstanding that unfortunately some of our scholars by and large hold the same opinion too!

4. In general, I believe the fair and valid approach is the suggestion of the late Ayatullah Bahjat: "Whatever we hear from other than the Ma'soomin, we examine it with the confirmed teachings of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s). We take anything compatible with their teachings, and discard anything that is contrary to their teachings, be it from a Shi'a or Sunni scholar." Therefore, I firmly believe those who are not well versed with the teachings of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s) should never study such books without a teacher. In our 'Practical Irfan' sessions (Editor: that can be found in the 'eHawza') in which we use the text of Manazelu-Saerin, one can acknowledge that in most of the instances this book is only an excuse for our discussions as we have very selectively and carefully taken from it.

May God keep us on the Right Path.

Q4: on the Reappearance of Imam Mahdi (ajtf)

HOW CAN I PROVE TO MY SUNNI FRIEND THAT IMAM MAHDI IS CURRENTLY ALIVE?

Question:

How can I prove to my Sunni friend that Imam Mahdi (ajtf) is currently alive?

Answer:

The easy way in short to prove the current existence of Imam Mahdi (ajtf) to a Sunni is the following:

Premise 1: All Muslims agree that the Holy Quran is very explicit and clear that the time will come when a universal and just Islamic state will be established, in which those who have been oppressed will lead the world. (Surah al-Anbi'a, Ayah 105)

Premise 2: It is narrated by Shi'a and Sunni narrators that:

a. The day of judgment will not come until a man from the offspring of the Prophet rises to spread peace and justice in the world. (Mosnad Ahmad 3:36 , H. 10920)

b. Whoever dies not knowing the Imam of his time has died the death of Ignorance (Kofr). (Muslim 3:239, H 1851)

c. Hadith al-Thaqalayn in which the Prophet (P) says: the Book of Allah and his Ahlul-Bayt (P) will never be separated until they join him at the Pool of Kouthar. (Mostadrak al-Hakim 3:10)

d. 12 Imams: The Prophet foretold that the Kholafa (successors after him) shall be 12 Imams, and that are all from Qoraysh. (Muslim 3:220, H. 1821). This hadith can only apply to the 12 Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s). Also, there is no doubt that Imam Askari (a.s) was martyred and died.

Conclusion: if Imam Mahdi is not born yet, then: there will be a separation between the Quran and Ahlul-bayt (a.s) (violating premise 2/c), the Imams won't be 12 (violation of premise 2/d.) and all contemporary Muslims die the death of Jahiliyah because there is no Imam of their time for them to know him (violation of premise 2/b).

HOW DO US YOUTH IN THE WEST PREPARE FOR IMAM MAHDI'S ARRIVAL?

Question:

What do you think is the most important thing for us youth living in the West to do to prepare for Imam Mahdi's (ajts) arrival? There are many social pressures in the West. What would be the priority for the youth to work on?

Answer:

In a nutshell:

1. Learn about your religion,

2. Be an active member of an islamic centre,

3. In addition to your daily prayers, talk to God as often as you can; like when you are driving, when you are lying in bed, whenever you get an opportunity, just talk to God and think of Him.

4. Everyday send 100 *Salawa*t for the well being of Imam Mahdi (ajtfs) and ask him to pray for you.

HAVE THE 313 ALREADY BEEN CHOSEN?

Question:

Is it true that the 313 companions have already been chosen and that we cannot be from amongst them nor make an intention to be from amongst them?

It is a small, yet important question.

Answer:

If the list was full, the Imam would have come. Don't worry, there is still room *InshAllah (*God willing)! Try to get in.

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 14-16

The Hereafter

-The Nature of Recompense
-Jahannam
-Jannah: the Ultimate Success

THE NATURE OF RECOMPENSE & RETRIBUTION

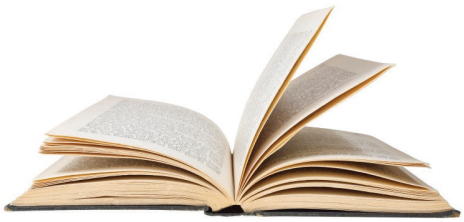
03

We are often under the impression that if we are good in this world, Allāh (SWT) will repay us in the Hereafter in the form of rewards, just like the way our parents reward us for getting good results at school by buying us gifts. Likewise, if we are bad in this world, Allāh (SWT) will punish us for our disobedience in Hell. This too is understood in a similar way to a judge passing a sentence for a criminal for committing a certain crime. In other words, although there is a relationship between our actions and the recompense, the two are not one and the same.

However, when we closely examine the Qurʾānic verses and aḥādīth of the Maʿṣūmīn (A) regarding the nature of reward and punishment in the Hereafter, we realise that the truth is much deeper. **In reality, not only is there a relationship between our actions and the recompense, the two are in fact one and the same.**

As human beings act in this world, they are also creating a reality for themselves in the Hereafter. We can therefore think of the Hereafter as a parallel world that exists even now but in a different plane of existence. The inner forms of our actions in this world are the outer, physical realities in the Hereafter.

A good way to understand this reality is with the example of a book. A book has two covers with hundreds of pages in between. When the book is closed, we can see and read the information on the covers, but cannot see the information contained within the book. When the book is opened, we can see the writing on an inner page, but cannot see the information on the covers.



Now think of the actions in this life as information contained in the covers of our book. When we commit these actions, we cannot see the reality of these deeds which are contained inside the book. In the Hereafter, our book will be opened and we will be shown the reality of our deeds. We will enjoy and rejoice over the beautiful realities of our good deeds, but we will be tormented by the ugly realities of our bad deeds.

In the Qurʾān, Allāh (SWT) says:

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَٰذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

The Book will be set up. Then you will see the guilty apprehensive of what is in it. They will say, 'Woe to us! What a book is this! It omits nothing, big or small, without enumerating it.' They will find present whatever they had done, and your Lord does not wrong anyone. [18:49]

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1- To understand that the reward and punishment of Paradise & Hell are actually the manifestations of the reality of our own deeds
2- To become acquainted with the Qurʾānic verses & aḥādīth that point to this reality

MY NOTES

GROUP ACTIVITY

Discuss in groups how the understanding of the real nature of reward and punishment that you learnt today will impact your everyday life, especially at the time you are tempted to commit sins.

MY NOTES

Similarly, in another verse, He says:

يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

On the Day when the punishment envelopes them, from above them and from under their feet, and He will say, "Taste what you used to do!" [29:55]

In other words, human beings do not get "paid" for their good deeds or sins in the next world - they actually create their own Paradise or Hell. This concept of our actions transforming into a physical form is called "**The Embodiment of Deeds**" (**Tajassum al-Aʿmāl**). The good that we create for ourselves in the next world can be multiplied and strengthened through persistence in good work here and the evil realities that we have created for ourselves in the next world can be neutralised or dissolved through repentance (istighfār and tawbah). In yet another verse, Allāh (SWT) says:

وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ، وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ

And that nothing belongs to man except what he strives for, and as for what he strove for, soon shall he see it. [53:39-40]

The verse above does not say that mankind shall see the reward of what they strove for. Rather, it says that they will see their actions themselves. In fact, the Qurʾān informs us that if we had reached the level of certainty (yaqīn) in our faith, we too could see Hell whilst in this world:

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ، لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

Nay! if you had known with a certain knowledge, You should most certainly have seen the Hell; [102:5-7]

Regarding the person that backbites someone else, the Qurʾān says that that person is in fact eating the flesh of his dead brother. This is not a metaphor, but the actual reality of backbiting. If we realised this, we would never backbite anyone else again, because of how disgusting its reality is!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allāh, surely Allāh is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. [49:12]

The following ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet (S) is also very useful in understand the reality of recompense and retribution:

When I ascended to the heavens (for Miʿrāj), I entered Paradise and saw in it an open plain and I saw angels constructing (mansions with) bricks of gold and bricks of silver; and sometimes they would stop. I asked them, "Why have you stopped (constructing)?" They replied, "(We wait) until our payment comes to us." I asked, "And what is your payment?" They said, "The words of the faithful: glory be to Allāh (subhān Allāh), and praise be to Allāh (wa al-ḥamdu lillāh), and there is no god by Allāh (wa lā ilāha illallāh), and Allāh is the greatest (wa Allāhu Akbar). When he recites, we build. When he is quiet, we stop."

The following narration is another example of this reality and proof that one who is virtuous is actually in Paradise-like gardens this very moment, even if he appears to be suffering and in a pitiful condition and one who is evil is burning in a Hell-like fire, even if he appears to be living in a palace and enjoying the pleasures and comforts of this world:

When the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil felt threatened by our 10th Holy Imām (A), he sent his commander to arrest the Imām and bring him to Sāmarra by force. When the Imām (A) arrived in Sāmarra, al-Mutawakkil first had him stay at a rundown place called the Inn of Saʿālik.

Sāliḥ b. Saʿīd reports:
I visited Imām al-Hādi (A) on the day he arrived in Sāmarra. I said to him, "May I be sacrificed for you! In every matter, they are only concerned to extinguish your light and to diminish you such that they have put you to stay in this hideous inn – the Inn of Saʿālik."

"Here you are Ibn Saʿīd" said the Imām (A), and he indicated with his hand. Suddenly I was amid pleasant gardens and flowing rivers and gardens in which were perfumed plants and beautiful maidens like veiled pearls. My sight became confused and I was very amazed. The Imām (A) said to me, "This is where we are. This belongs to us, Ibn Saʿīd. We are not in the Inn of Saʿālik!"

IN SUMMARY

1. What is the true relationship between our deeds and the reward and punishment in the Hereafter?
2. Can you explain two verses of the Qurʾān which point to this reality?
3. Why is it the case that our Paradise and Hell are being created this very moment?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "Three things follow a dead person (as he/she is on his/her way to be buried): his family, his wealth and his actions. Two go back and one stays: his family and wealth go back and his actions stay (with him)."

KEY POINTS

1. It is not the case that Allāh (SWT) will reward us for our good deeds like our parents reward us for doing something good.

2. It is also not the case that Allāh (SWT) will punish us for our bad deeds like a judge punishes a criminal by passing a sentence on him in court.

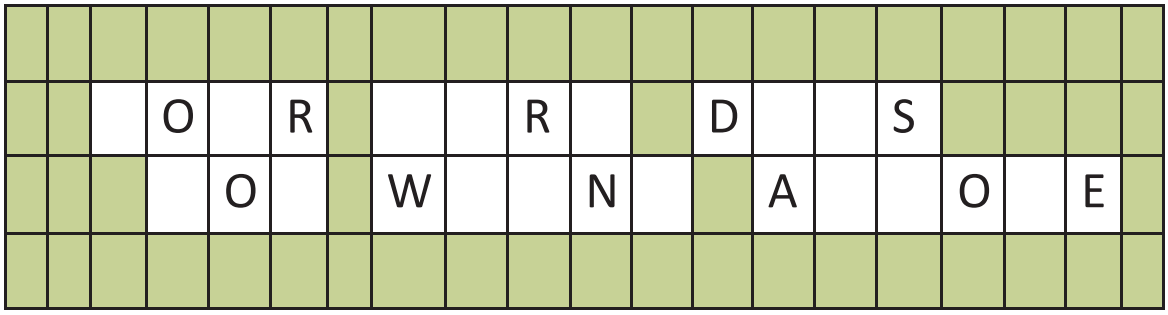
3. Rather, the reward and punishment are the deeper realities of our actions in this world which will be manifested to us in the Hereafter.

4. We cannot see the deeper reality of our action because of the veils on our eyes. The Qurʾān states that if we had reached the level of certainty, we would be able to see the Hellfire today.

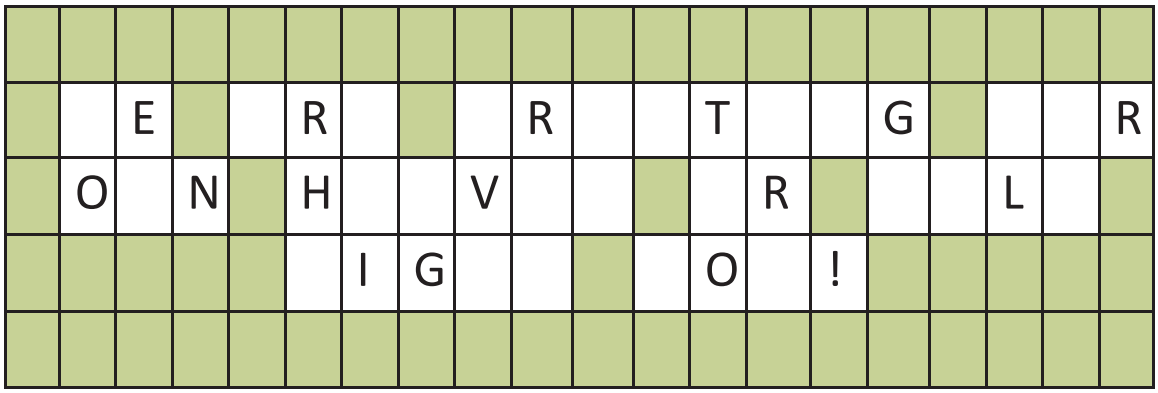
03 ACTIVITY

GUESS THE PHRASE!

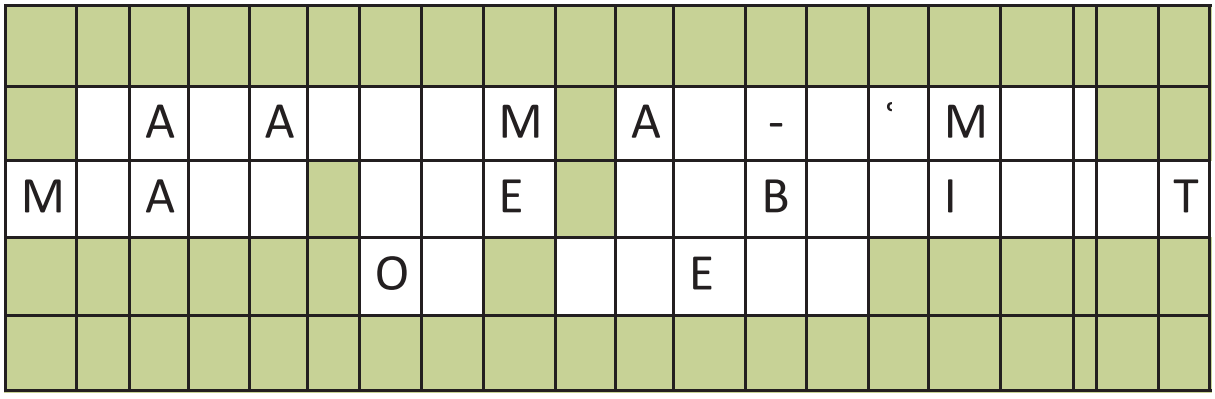
There is an alphabet bank under each table. The letters in the bank can be used multiple times.



Alphabet bank [O,E,U,R,Y,L,N,D,G,T]



Alphabet bank [A,E,I,O,U,H,W,N,T,L,C,R]



Alphabet bank [L,Ā,E,O,N,F,D,M,T,J,S,U,A,L,H]

JAHANNAM: THE ABODE OF THE WRETCHED 04

1) To start off with, it is important to remember that just like all created things around us in this world are manifestations of the different Names of Allāh (SWT), all events and places in the Hereafter too are manifestations of His Divine Names, except that the manifestations in the Hereafter are much stronger. After the long journey of numerous checkpoints that takes place on the Day of Judgment, our final home is either Paradise (Jannah) or Hell (Jahannam).

2) Hell is a place of ultimate disgrace and punishment, where Allāh (SWT)'s wrath is continuously manifested upon its inmates. Allāh (SWT) created human beings for Paradise, not Hell. He placed us in this world so that we may acquire Paradise through our good deeds. Yet, some of us use this time to amass evil deeds. Even the smallest amount of evil cannot enter into Paradise, because Paradise is a place where only goodness exists.

The purpose of Hell is to purify human beings of their evil deeds through the severe punishment that they face there. In reality, as was explained in the last lesson, the punishment that they face in Hell is the wretched reality of the evil deeds they committed in this world. Once they are purified of their evil deeds, they can then finally join the people of Paradise to live in it forever.

From this perspective, even the punishment of Hell, has an aspect of Divine Mercy, as it allows people to be purified of their sins. Allāh (SWT) says in the Qur'ān:

هَٰذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ، يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آنٍ ، فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

This is the Hell which the guilty used to deny; they shall go round between it and between hot, boiling water. So, which of your Lord's bounties do you deny? [55:43-45]

3) However, some people have become so evil in this world, such that it is impossible to purify them from their evil deeds. No amount of punishment in Hell can separate them from their evil. Evil has become part and parcel of their core reality. The Qur'ān describes such people as deaf, dumb and blind, not being able to return to the straight path again:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the purpose of Hell
2. To become familiar with the Qur'ānic verses dealing with the description of Hell

MY NOTES

CLASS ACTIVITY

Discuss why someone even with a speck of evil in their hearts cannot enter Jannah without first being purified of his/her evil.

04 JAHANNAM: THE ABODE OF THE WRETCHED

MY NOTES

صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

Deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they will not turn back. [2:18]

Their hearts are sealed by Allāh (SWT) once and for all:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Allāh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them. [2:7]

Such evil people will be made to live in Hell for eternity:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ، خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ لَّا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

Surely Allāh has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a burning fire, in which they will remain forever and they shall not find any protector or helper. [33:64-5]

4) When we speak about the different events of the Hereafter, including Paradise and Hell, it is important to keep in mind that it is impossible for us to truly understand what will happen there and how life will be. This is because the Hereafter is a much grander world governed by totally different laws. Just like it is impossible to explain to a baby in the womb of its mother the nature of this world, it is impossible for us to truly grasp the reality of life in the Hereafter. In fact, the jump between this world and the Hereafter is much greater than the jump for the baby from the womb to this world. Having said that, Allāh (SWT) has described Hell in many verses for us so that we can have some basic sort of understanding of that dreaded reality.

A GLIMPSE OF JAHANNAM

MY NOTES

1) The Qurʾān describes Hell as a living creature that shows emotions such as rage. It seeks out sinners and envelops them:

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ ، تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۖ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ

When they will be cast into it, they will hear it roar as it boils, as though it will burst with rage. Every time a multitude is cast into it, its keepers will ask them: "Did no warner come to you?" [67:7-8]

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتِ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِن مَّزِيدٍ

On that Day We shall ask Hell: "Are you full?" And it will reply: "Are there any more?" [50:30]

2) In a ḥadīth, Imām ʿAlī (A) mentions that Hell has seven different gates leading to different areas of Hell. The punishment in each of these areas will be different in terms of harshness and pain. One of these is called The Crusher (al-Ḥuṭamah). It will crush everyone who is thrown inside it and grind them to powder. Then they will be made whole again, just to be crushed again and again. Unlike fire in this world, which can only burn our bodies, the Hellfire also penetrates into our souls and burns it:

كَلَّا ۖ لَيُنبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ، وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ، نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

No indeed! He will be thrust into the Crusher! What will explain to you what the Crusher is? It is kindled fire of Allāh, which reaches to the hearts. [104:4-7]

3) Allāh (SWT) has created angels specifically to torture the inmates of Hell and to stop them from being able to escape from the pits of Hell. These angels are referred to as the Zabāniyah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded. [66:6]

MY NOTES

كَلَّا لَئِن لَّمْ يَنتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ، نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ، فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ، سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ

No! If he does not stop, We shall drag him by his forehead - his lying, sinful forehead. Let him summon his comrades, We shall summon the guards of Hell! [96:15-8]

4) The people of Hell always continuously suffer from the pangs of hunger and thirst. They will be given boiling hot water, which will make them even more thirsty. As food, they will only have bitter fruits from the tree of Zaqqūm. This tree grows in the bottom of Hell and its fruits will look like the heads of devils. After drinking and eating, they will be taken back to face their punishments.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ، لَآكِلُونَ مِن شَجَرٍ مِّن زَقُّومٍ ، فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ، فَشَارِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ، فَشَارِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهِيمِ

And you who have gone astray and denied the truth, will eat from the bitter tree of Zaqqūm, filling your bellies with it, and drink scalding water, lapping it like thirsty camels.[56: 51-6]

...أَذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ ، إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظَّالِمِينَ ، إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ ، طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ ، فَإِنَّهُمْ لَآكِلُونَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ، ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ ، ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْجَحِيمِ

... Is this the better welcome, or the tree of Zaqqūm, which we have made a test for the evildoers? This tree grows in the heart of the blazing Fire, and its fruits are like devils' heads. They will fill their bellies eating from it, then drink scalding water on top of it; then return to the blazing Fire. [37:62-8]

5) Despite all these terrible punishments of Hell and others which haven't been mentioned in this lesson, the worst punishment the inmates of Hell will face will be the feeling of being extremely far from the presence and Mercy of Allāh (SWT).

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَن رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوبُونَ

No indeed! On that Day they will be screened off from their Lord [83:15]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

But those who sell out God's covenant and their own oats for a small price will have no share in the life to come. God will neither speak to them nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection- He will not cleanse them [of their sins] - agonizing torment awaits them. [3:77]

6) Due to this, the inmates of Hell will be constantly overcome with tremendous regret at how they lived there lives:

كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ

...In this way, Allāh will make them see their deeds as a source of bitter regret: they shall not leave the Fire. [2:167]

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا

And the day when the unjust one shall bite his hands saying: Oh! would that I had taken a way with the Messenger! [25:27]

May Allāh (SWT) protect us all from such an outcome...

IN SUMMARY

1. How can Hell be viewed in one way as Divine Mercy?
2. How many gates are there leading to different areas in Hell?
3. What is al-Ḥuṭamah?
4. Describe the tree of Zaqqūm.
5. What is the worse punishment of the inmates of Hell?

DID YOU KNOW?

Angel Jibrā'īl (A) said to the Holy Prophet (S): **"If only one garment from among the garments of the people of the Fire was to be hung between the sky and the earth, the people of this world would die of its smell."**

KEY POINTS

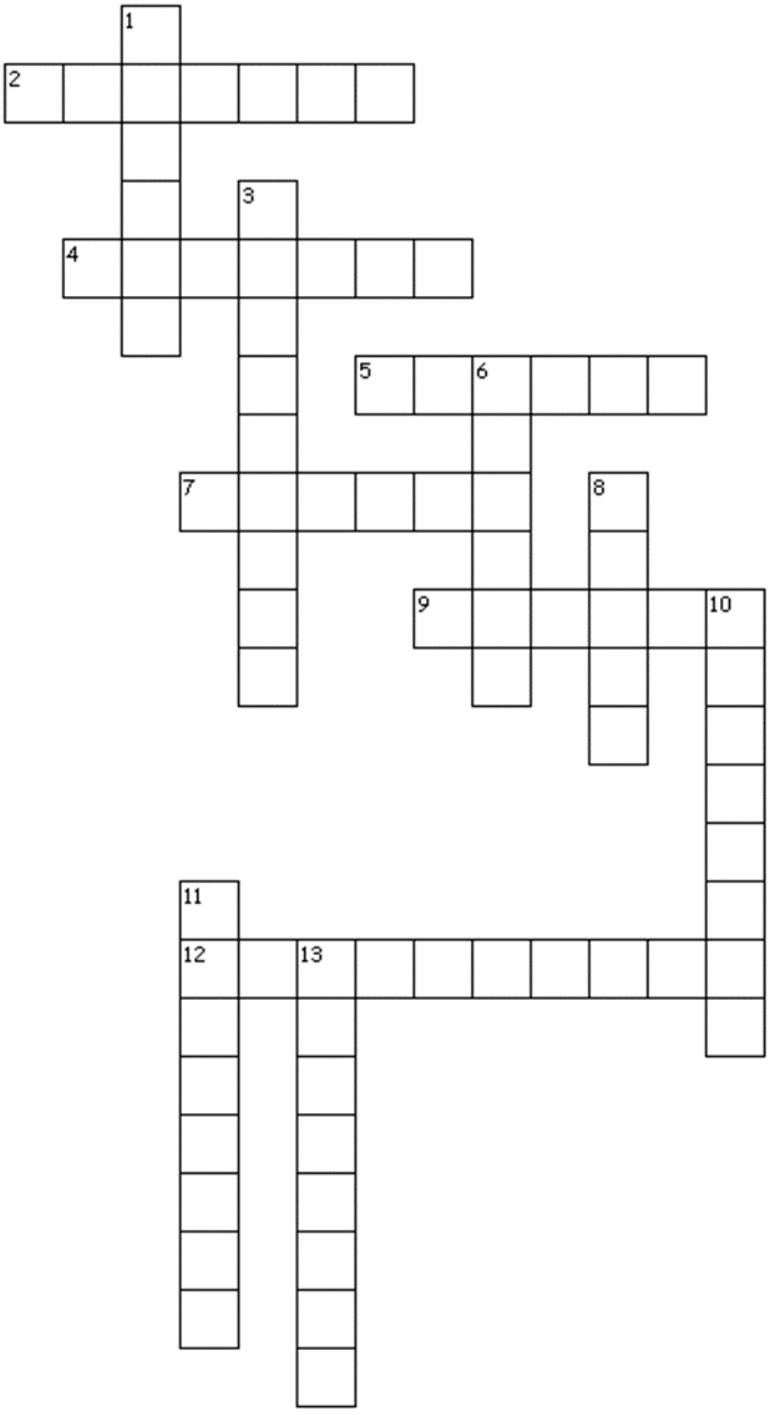
1. Just like in this world, all the events and places in the Hereafter are the manifestation of the Divine Names of Allāh (SWT).

2. Hell is where the wrath of Allāh (SWT) is manifested most severely.

3. However, even Hell has elements of Divine Mercy because the punishments therein serve as purifying agents, such that eventually most people will leave Hell and enter Paradise.

4. Some people will remain in Hell for eternity. These are those who have committed so many evil deeds that evil has become part and parcel of their reality. No amount of punishment can remove their evil from them.

ACTIVITY



ACROSS

2. The punishment faced in Hell is due to the _____ of our evil deeds that we committed in this world.
4. One of the gates of Hell is called al-_____.
5. The purpose of Hell is to _____ human beings of their evil deeds.
7. Hell in the Qurʾān is described as a _____creature that shows emotions such as rage
9. The _____ of the evil-doers are sealed.
12. It is _____ for us to truly understand what will take place in the Hereafter.

DOWN

1. The food of Hell will be the bitter fruits from the tree of _____.
3. Angels created specifically to torture the inmates of Hell are called _____.
6. The inmates of Hell will be constantly overcome with tremendous _____.
8. The worst punishment the inmates of Hell is the feeling of being extremely far from Allāh (SWT)'s _____.
10. The manifestation of the Divine Names of Allāh (SWT) are much _____in the Hereafter.
11. Hell is a place of ultimate _____ and punishment.
13. _____ is a place where only goodness exists.

JANNAH: THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS 05

1) The Holy Qurʾān refers to the final dwelling place of the righteous people in the Hereafter as Jannah. This Arabic word originates from the root word Ja-na-na, which refers to something that is hidden from sight. Paradise is referred to as Jannah, because of its description as a garden hidden from sight due to being covered with trees. Another possible reason for its name is because this promised garden is hidden from our sights in this world.

Apart from human beings and angels, the third type of intelligent beings described by Allāh (SWT) in the Qurʾān are the Jinn. The name Jinn originates from the same root as Jannah. They are known as such because they too hidden from human sight.

2) The Qurʾān provides us with multiple detailed accounts of the nature of Paradise and the type of life its inhabitants will enjoy. It is the abode of everlasting peace and bliss. There is no pain nor suffering in Jannah. No worries, no old age and its inhabitants will never feel any sort of tiredness or boredom. In fact, the Qurʾān is clear that no matter how much we try, we can never even get close to understanding what is awaiting the believers in Paradise:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

No one knows what delights of the eyes are kept hidden for them as a reward for their deeds. [32:17]

3) As discussed in the last two lessons, the reward and punishment of Paradise and Hell are the manifestations of the reality of our deeds in this world. When we perform good deeds or sin in this world, we only see the apparent forms of our deeds. However, the true beauty or ugliness of our deeds will be shown to us in the Hereafter. Paradise and Hell exist today. We are creating our Paradise or Hell with every action that we perform!

4) Human beings were created to eventually live in Jannah. Anything other than Jannah is below the worth of the human being, the best of Allāh (SWT)'s creation. He granted human beings the special gift of free will, so that they can perform good deed in this world and create their Jannah.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature of Paradise
2. To become familiar with the Qurʾānic verses dealing with the description of Paradise

MY NOTES

CLASS ACTIVITY

Reflect upon the following ḥadīth. What do you understand from it? How is the ḥadīth relevant to you in your daily life?

Imām al-Bāqir (A): **"Paradise is surrounded by trials and patience. So whoever endures trials in the world will enter Paradise. Hell is surrounded by pleasures and desires. Thus, whoever allows himself its pleasures and desires [of the world] will enter the Fire."**

MY NOTES

Imām ʿAlī (A): **"Verily there is no price for your soul except for Paradise, so do not sell it for anything else."**

However, just like when raw material is used in a factory to manufacture precious items and in the end we are also left with some waste product, the same too goes for human beings who choose to use their free will to perform evil deeds. The only fitting place for this waste product is Jahannam.

Imām al-Ṣādiq (A) said: **"The people of the Fire will be kept permanently in the Fire because their intentions in the world were such that it if they were to live forever therein, they would disobey Allāh forever. And verily the people of Paradise will be made to remain in Paradise permanently because their intentions in this world were such that if they were to live forever therein, they would obey Allāh forever. So it is due to these intentions that these and those have their permanent residence."**

Then the Imām recited the word of Allāh, the Exalted: **"Say, 'Everyone acts according to his character"** and said that it means according to their intention.

5) The path to Paradise is through Hell. All of us will pass through Hell:

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا

There is not one of you but shall pass by Hell. This is a decree which your Lord will fulfill. [19:71]

The most righteous people described in sūrat al-Wāqiʿah as "The Foremost of the Foremost" (al-sābiqūn al-sābiqūn), will be kept far from the Hellfire and will quickly pass through to Paradise.

As for the rest, they will need to become cleansed from all traces of evil in them before being fit to enter Paradise. This will either take place through direct Divine Forgiveness and Mercy or through purification via temporary punishment in Hell.

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ...

And we shall strip all rancour from within their hearts... [7:43]

Imām al-Bāqīr (A): **"Some people will burn in the Fire, until they are burned to ashes [and become pure] - then they will be taken out through intercession."**

Only the most evil of people, who cannot be purified from their evil no matter how much they are punished, will remain in Hell for eternity.

THE DESCRIPTION OF JANNAH

MY NOTES

1) Jannah is described in the Qur'ān as a beautiful garden where rivers will flow:

مَّثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ أُكُلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا ۚ تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا ۖ وَّعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ

And such will be the Paradise promised to the God-fearing: rivers will flow beneath it, its fruits will be eternal, and so will be its blissful shade. That is the ultimate destiny of the God-fearing while Fire is the destiny of the unbelievers. [13:35]

2) The inhabitants of Jannah will live in huge palaces made of gold, silver, pearls and rubies, where they will be reclining on their thrones and socialising with other people in Jannah:

عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ، مُّتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ

On thrones decorated, Reclining on them, facing one another. [56:15-6]

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَىٰ فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ ۚ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ

Reclining on beds, the inner coverings of which are of silk brocade; and the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach [55:54]

3) In Paradise, people will be reunited with their righteous family members and will be married to the most beautiful heavenly spouses created especially for them, called the Ḥūr al-ʿĪn. Angels will be there to serve and greet the believers:

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ ۖ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِم مِّن كُلِّ بَابٍ ، سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُم بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ ۚ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

The gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good from among their parents and their spouses and their offspring; and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate: "Peace be upon you. You merit this reward for your steadfastness. How excellent is the ultimate abode!" [13:23-4]

05 JANNAH: THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS

DID YOU KNOW?

Imām ʿAlī (A) has said: **"Paradise has eight doors: a door through which the prophets and the truthful ones will enter, a door through which the martyrs and the righteous will enter, five doors through which our Shīʿah and our lovers will enter...a door through which the rest of the Muslims will enter, those that bear witness to 'There is no god but Allāh and who do not bear an atom's weight of enmity towards us, the Ahl al -Bayt."**

KEY POINTS

1. Jannah is the Arabic word used in the Qurʾān for Paradise. It is the eventual destination of the good-doers.

2. Paradise is a pure place and no evil can enter it. Therefore, all its inhabitants will be purified from their evil before they can enter it. This will either be by direct Divine Forgiveness and Mercy or through temporary punishment in Hell.

3. People will live physical lives in Paradise and the beauty and pleasure of Paradise is beyond our wildest imagination.

4. The greatest joy for the people of Paradise is attaining the Pleasure of Allāh (SWT).

4) There will be various different types of rivers flowing in Paradise. The food and drink will resemble those in this world, but the taste will be far greater than what is available in this world. Eating and drinking from these will also carry immense spiritual pleasure and benefit:

مَّثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِّن مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّن لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِّلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

A parable of the garden which those guarding (against evil) are promised: Therein are rivers of water that does not alter, and rivers of milk the taste whereof does not change, and rivers of drink delicious to those who drink, and rivers of honey clarified and for them therein are all fruits and protection from their Lord. (Are these) like those who abide in the fire and who are made to drink boiling water so it rends their bowels asunder. [47:15]

5) Anything and everything the people of Paradise desire would be made instantly available for them:

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُم مَّا يَدَّعُونَ

They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire.[36:57]

6) Each day the people of Paradise will be shown new manifestations of the Beauty and Majesty of Allāh (SWT) and each day they will continue to get closer to Him. Despite all of the physical pleasures that they will enjoy in Paradise, the greatest happiness for them will come from attaining the Pleasure of Allāh (SWT) (**riḍwān Allāh**), knowing that their efforts in this life paid off and that He is happy with them:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ۚ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

Allāh has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is the pleasure of Allāh; that is the grand achievement. [9:72]

IN SUMMARY

1. Why is the path to Paradise through Hell?
2. How are we creating our Paradise or Hell today with each action we perform?
3. Describe three different features of Paradise.

ACTIVITY

UNSCRAMBLE EACH OF THE CLUE WORDS

Copy the letters in the numbered cells to the matching cells at the bottom.

DOLG

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8

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QIBNAUS

KISL

TNDYSIE

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1

FASTASDTSNESE

3

NIWLADRAALH

2

BUYTAE

5

JAMSYTE

10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 17-21

Imam Mahdi

1. Brief History
2. Intidhaar
3. Dhuhoor
4. Reasons for the Ghaybah
5. Beliefs of the Ahl al Sunnah

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 17: Imam Mahdi - Brief History

Learning Objectives
- Know the primary factors behind the Abbasids' fear of the Imams (a)
- Be familiar with the basic historical details of the birth of Imam al-Hujjah (a), the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari (a), and the subsequent events
- Learn about the minor occultation (Al-Ghaybah as-Sughra) and the major occultation (Al-Ghaybah al-Kubra) and the differences between the two

In this unit, we will learn more about Imam al-Mahdi (peace be upon him). This lesson is a brief history of major events that took place leading up to his birth, his birth itself, and after his birth up till the end of the minor occultation and the beginning of the major occultation.

Note to teacher: A good source to consult for background information on the history of Imam al-Mahdi (a) is http://www.al-islam.org/occultation-twelfth-imam-historical-background-jassim-m-hussain.

Situation of the Imams and their followers during the Rule of the Abbasid Khalifas

The Abbasids gained power during the life of Imam as-Sadiq (a). They used to fear the Imams due to several factors, including:
- Throughout their reign, there were many uprising and rebellions lead by Allawis (descendants of Imam Ali (a)). In many cases they had nothing to do with the Imams, but because of their association with Imam Ali (a), the Abbasid Caliphs were uneasy about the Imams, who were the direct descendants of Imam Ali (a). On some occasions, reliable Shi'ahs also participated in the uprisings, and the Imams were suspected of having a role in them. The Imams used to deny the claim of any 'Allawi who claimed that he was al-Qa'im al-Mahdi promised by the Prophet, but they sympathised with some 'Allawis who were loyal to them.

- The presence of ahadith which predicted that the final Imam would come from the family of the Imams and that he would be the source of destruction for all other governments. They knew, on the basis of these traditions, that the number of Imams would be 12, and so they guessed that this Imam would be

born to a child of the 10th Imam, Imam al-Hadi, and be Imam al-Hadi's grandson. This is why in particular they were very harsh to Imam al-Hadi (a); they forced him to be exiled to Samarra, and eventually poisoned him. Similarly, they treated Imam al-Askari (a) very harshly. He was under house arrest and was forced to report to the palace of the caliph in Samarra twice a week.

Birth of Imam al-Hujjah (a)

The Imam (a) was born to Imam al-Askari (a) and his mother was a slave of the Imam by the name of Narjis, Rayhana, Saqil, and/or Sawsan. Some reports say that she was formerly a Roman princess who was captured by the Muslim army and eventually was given to Imam al-Askari (a). Other reports say that she was from an African country.

Scholars agree that he was born on the 15th of Sha'aban. According to the popularly accepted opinion, he was born in the year 255 AH.

Traditions indicate that the pregnancy of his mother and his subsequent birth were concealed from people in order to protect his safety.

According to traditions, the Imam (a) gathered forty of his closest companions after the Imam was born to show them his son. He urged them to keep the name of the Imam secret.

Events after the Martyrdom of Imam al-Askari (a)

After the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari (a) on the 8th of Rabee` al-Awwal in the year 260 AH, Imam al-Mahdi (a) led the funeral prayers. His uncle, Ja'afar, the brother of Imam al-Askari (a) was about to lead the prayers when the Imam (a) interrupted him saying that he was more deserving to lead the prayers for his own father.

Another incident that took place soon after the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari (a) was the arrival in Samarra of a group of shi'as from Qum,, Iran, with letters of questions and legal taxes.
They didn't know about the martyrdom of Imam al-Askari but when they found out, they were told to go to Ja'far. They met him and wanted to test him. They asked Ja'far to tell them about the amount of money they had brought

and who had given it to them. Ja'far replied that he was not a prophet and that what the Shia claimed about Imam al- -'Askari being able to do such things were mere lies. He then told them to hand the money over to him, but they refused to do so, and their quarrel became public.

While they were arguing someone came, called them by name and led them to a house. There he showed them someone who was believed to be the representative of the Twelfth Imam and who revealed to them how much money they had brought. They then accepted the Imamat of the Twelfth Imam.

Ja'far went to the caliph, al-Mu'tamid, and informed him that the Shi'as still believed in the existence of a son of al--'Askari. Al-Mu'tamid immediately had this investigated by sending a group of soldiers with Ja'far to search the house of al-'Askari and the houses of the neighbors. But they were unable to find the Imam (a).

After this episode, the Abbasid government became occupied with its internal problems which made them so busy that for some time they could not bother about Imam al-Mahdi (a).

Al-Ghaybah as-Sughrah (the Minor Occultation)

The minor occultation began from the year 260 A.H when Imam al-Mahdi (a) became the Imam. One of the reasons why it is called "minor" is because its duration is shorter than the major occultation, which began in the year 329 A.H. and continues until today.

During the minor occultation, the Imam appointed four sufaraa (plural of *safeer*: ambassador) to be his representatives. The four representatives were:
- 'Uthman b. Saeed al-Umari
- 'Uthman b. Saeed's son Muhammad b. Uthman
- al-Husayn b. Rawh al-Nawbakhti
-' Ali b. Muhammad as-Samari

Being a representative of the Imam was a grave responsibility. These four individuals were renowned for their knowledge and *taqwa*. As the Imam's representative, their major responsibilities included:
- Acting as a representative of the Imam in taking care of the needs of the Shi'ah. The safeers would sometimes take people to the see the Imam al-

Mahdi (a). Or, they would taken their letters to the Imam (a) and come back with replies of from the Imam (a) to them.
- Hide the existence of the Imam and convince the authorities that he didn't exist
- Protect the shi'ah from further splits by proving to them the Imamah of the 12th Imam
- Manage the financial system of khums, zakat, etc. for the Imams

Six days before the end of the life of the fourth safeer, he received a letter from the Imam (a), saying,

May Allah give good rewards to your brothers for [mourning for] you (i.e. on your death), for indeed you shall die after six days. So prepare your affairs, and do not appoint anyone to take your place after your death. For the second occultation has now occurred, and there can be no appearance until, after a long time when Allah gives His permission, hearts become hardened and the world becomes filled with injustice. And someone shall come to my (Shi'a) claiming that he has seen me [and is my representative]; but beware of anyone claiming to have seen me before the rise of as--Sufyani and the outcry from the sky, for he shall be a slanderous liar.

Six days after the receipt of this letter, Ali Ibn Muhammad as-Samari completed his pending tasks, made his will and breathed his last. This was in the year 329 AH and it marked the beginning of al-ghabyah al-kubraa.

The Legend of the Cellar (Sardaab) of the Imam (a)

The cellar (sardaab) is part of the residence of three Imams (a) in Samarra - Imam al-Hadi (a), Imam Hasan al-Askari (a) and Imam al-Mahdi (a) himself. Imam al-Hadi (a) ordered that it be built as a place of worship and a cooler location in his home where his family could go to when the weather was very hot. It is significant because
a) It is a place where all three Imams (a) worshipped Allah and
b) For centuries since the Ghaybah, Shi'ahs have gone to visit the blessed home of the Imams in Samarra to pray to Allah to hasten the reappearance of the Imam (a). This has made it a gathering place of du'a and remembrance of Allah.

Some people have claimed that Shi'as believe the Imam is hiding in his cellar.

Actually, it is an established fact that Imam al-Mahdi (a) did not sink in the cellar's wall nor did its earth swallow him. He did not disappear like the Jinn from the human eyes nor did he fly to the skies in the form of angels. Just as the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had become invisible for the Meccan polytheists at the time of emigration, similarly, Imam al-Mahdi (a) emerged from the cellar but the Caliph's men were unable to see him (of course with Allah's permission). The story is as follows:

During the reign of the Abbasid caliph Mu'tazid, he dispatched three officers to Imam al-Askari's (a) house. The orders were clear - behead anybody you find among the males and bring their heads to the court as souvenirs. Rasheeq Maarzaani, one of the three selected officers, narrates the incident as follows:

As per the orders, we attacked the house…We saw a room so huge as if it were an ocean. At the end of the room, there was a straw mat spread on water. On the mat, a man with a handsome appearance and awe-inspiring dignity sat performing his salaat and did not pay any attention to our presence. One of us went ahead with the intention of entering the room but was drowned. He struggled to survive inside the water and waved at us vigorously so that we may extend our hands to pull him out, but to no avail. The second one among us also attempted to enter the room and met with the same fate. I was left standing alone, perplexed and confused. I pleaded with the owner of house, 'I seek pardon from Allah and from you. By Allah! I don't know what's happening and whom I have approached. I seek repentance from Allah.' He did not pay attention to my talk at all and was engrossed in his own work. I was scared and returned.

After the failure of this attempt, Mu'tazid sent more officers with the same orders. When they reached the house, they heard somebody reciting the Holy Quran in the cellar (sardaab). They surrounded the cellar to prevent anybody from escaping. Thereafter, Imam al-Mahdi (a) emerged from the cellar right in front of all those present. Miraculously, with Allah's permission, the commander could not see him and hence behaved as if nothing had happened.

Questions for Review

1- What are two reasons why the Abbasid Caliphs feared the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a)?
2- According to the letter of Imam al-Mahdi (a) to Ali b. Muhammad as-Samari, in what sort of circumstances will Allah grant permission for the re-

eappearance?
3- According to this letter, what are two of the signs that will occur prior to the Imam re-appearing and appointing representatives?
4- Is the cellar of the Imam's (a) home a special place? Why or why not?

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 18- Intidhaar

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the meaning of the term *intidhaar*
- Contrast the two different understandings of *intidhaar* and explain how these understandings derive from interpretation of traditions relating to the re-emergence of the Imam (a)
- Explain the responsibilities entailed by the positive understanding of *intidhaar*

Meaning of 'Intidhaar' and its Relevance to the Ghaybah

Intidhaar means **to be in a state of awaiting and anticipation**. For example, if you are expecting a guest to visit your home at any moment, the state of anticipation that you experience is called Intidhaar.

Many traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (a) mention that one of the responsibilities of the Shi'ah during the Ghaybah is for them to be *muntadhireen* (منتظرين) or in the state of Intidhaar (انتظار). For example, Imam as-Sajjad (a) said,

> The people at the time of his [the 12th Imam's] Ghaybah who believe in his Imamah and are
> *muntadhireen* (anticipating) his reappearance are the best people of all times. This is because
> Allah, the Exalted, granted them intellects, understanding, and awareness such that it's as if
> the Imam were not hidden from them but rather they can see him. (Kamal ad-Deen, v. 1, p. 320)

It's reported that the Prophet (s) said, "The best action of my ummah is to be in the state of Intidhaar (anticipation) of the deliverance [through the re-emergence of the Imam (a)]." (Al-Imamah wa at-Tabsirah, p. 21)

Passive and Destructive Understandings of Intidhaar

There have been some people throughout the Ghaybah who have understood Intidhaar incorrectly:

Some have understood "being in a state of waiting" to mean being passive. They advocate being unconcerned and apathetic about the affairs of the society, and focusing only on the self.

A few have gone further to say that during the Ghaybah, the responsibility of the Shi'ah is to contribute towards the injustice in the world in order to bring about the re-appearance of the Imam more swiftly. This is a 'destructive' understanding of *intidhaar*.

One of the main reasons for these perspectives is many traditions of the Prophet (s) and the Ahlul Bayt (a) mention that the Imam will reappear and spread justice to the same extent that previously injustice had filled the earth. For example, it's reported that the Prophet (s) said, "If only one day remained in this world, Allah would prolong that day…until he would send forth a man from me (or from my family). His name will be my name…and he will fill the earth with justice to the extent it had been filled with injustice." (Sunan Abi Dawood)

Active Understanding of Intidhaar

Let's look again at the example of a host waiting for his / her guests to arrive. Would a good host be in a passive state waiting for the guest, or actively striving to prepare the home for the guest to arrive?

Imagine that a teacher was teaching a lesson in a classroom. The teacher tells the students that she has to leave the classroom for some time, but she leaves behind some work for them to do. What would good students do? They would prepare themselves so they would be ready for the lesson when the teacher returns. Their anticipation of the teacher's return would lead them to actively study.

In this respect, *ulamaa* have explained that the correct interpretation of *intidhaar* is an *active* state of awaiting. This active state implies:

1) Not being happy and content with the current situation in the world of the Imam being absent and not being in the position of leading the society

2) Hope in a better future with the arrival of the Imam (a)

3) Trying to change the current situation for the better, and feeling responsibility towards establishing a society of justice through actively struggling against injustice, enjoining good (Al-Amr bil M'aroof) and Forbidding Evil (An-Nahy anil munkar).

Regarding the traditions that mention that the earth will be filled with injustice before the Imam arrives,

1) They don't in any way indicate that those who wish the Imam (a) to reappear should want there to be injustice and cease to struggle against the oppressors of the time. Rather, they have to perform their duty to struggle against injustice and oppressors in preparation for the Imam's establishment of universal justice. In their attempts to do so, they may be able to suppress many oppressors before the coming of the Imam (a). In order for the traditions to be true, even the presence of a single oppressor who is able to spread injustice throughout the earth is sufficient.

2) Traditions indicate that the Imam (a) will have 313 core companions who have noble characteristics including high levels of taqwa. Throughout the major occultation, there have been a number of awaiters of the Imam (a) that have seemed to meet those characteristics. This means that beyond just having such companions, the Imam (a) is also waiting for the grounds to be prepared so that his reappearance will accomplish the intended goal of establishing worldwide justice.

Practical Responsibilities Entailed by Active Intidhaar

Actively awaiting the coming of the Imam (a) entails the following responsibilities:

1) Knowing the Imam (a)

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said, "Know your Imam! If you have known your Imam, whether this matter [of the rule of the Ahlul Bayt (a)] comes sooner or later will not affect you." (Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 371) Knowing the Imam (a) does not mean knowing biographical information such as the date of his birth and detailed family information, but rather means knowing our responsibilities towards him. (Note to teacher: Give the example of army soldiers knowing their

sergeant, or sports team players knowing their captain.)

2) Having a high level of Taqwa and commitment to performing one's religious duties and abstaining from the *haraam.* Imam as-Sadiq (a) said, "…Indeed we have a kingdom that Allah will bring about when He pleases. Whoever wishes to be among the companions of the Qaaim, let him await [his reappearance] and act with a high level of care [with respect to his responsibilities] and have excellent *akhlaaq*. If he passes away and the Qaaim uprises afterwards, he will have the reward of one who was alive at the time of the reappearance." (Al-Ghaybah of an-Nu'maani, p. 200).

Having a high level of Taqwa is important at all times, but particular during the Ghaybah, because one of the reasons for the Ghaybah is that it is a test to see who will remain steadfast in their commitment to the Deen.

3) Praying of the Imam
In one of the letters of the Imam (a), he commanded his followers, "Make plenty of du'a for the hastening of the deliverance." (Kamal ad-Deen, v. 2. p. 485). The Ahlul Bayt (a) have also commanded their followers to pray for the protection of the Imam (a). Giving sadaqah for the protection of the Imam (a) has also been recommended. Making du'a is not just a matter of saying some words and expecting a response. Rather, the reality of du'a is to feel a real need in the heart and to strive to make oneself worthy of receiving the appropriate response.

4) Organizing gatherings to keep alive his mission and to prepare the grounds for his arrival. These include gatherings of Du'a and the recitation of supplications such as Du'a an-Nudbah.

5) To be ready with one's body and soul for his reappearance. Imam as-Sadiq (a) said, "Let every one of you prepare for the uprising of the Qaaim (a) even it be with an arrow." (Al-Ghaybah of an-Nu'maani, p. 320). Ulamaa have explained that this means that all should prepare with whatever expertise they possess. (Note to teacher: Discuss what preparation people of different occupations could undertake).

6) Renewing one's pledge and commitment to the Imam on a daily basis. The Ahlul Bayt (a) have taught their followers supplications such as Du'a al-`Ahd - the Supplication of the Pledge - (Note to teacher: It's *Ahd* from عهد not Ahad

from احد). This du'a states, "O Allah, I renew my pledge to him on this morning, and every morning." (Note to teacher: Play this du'a in class - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WB2HrLcaEic).

Questions for Review:
- Why is having a high level of taqwa particular important during the Ghaybah?
- Contrast correct and incorrect understandings of the traditions that state that the Imam will reappear and spread justice in the earth to the extent it had been previously been filled with injustice.
- What are the components of active *intidhaar*?
- What are the different types of *intidhaar* you see among those who claim to be awaiting the Imam (a)?
- Read over the translation of Du'a al-`Ahd and list out a) the responsibilities it describes for the waiters of the Imam (a) and b) for what reasons, according to the Du'a, one should long for the arrival of the Imam.
- What role does social media play in a) helping waiters of the Imam who are actively awaiting his arrival keep the mission of the Imam (a) alive and prepare the grounds for his arrival and b) making people apathetic towards injustice taking place in society?

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 19: Dhuhoor of Imam al-Mahdi (a)

Learning Objectives:
- Be familiar with the main events that are foretold to take place with the re-appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (a)
- Understand how knowing these events can be a source of hope and inspiration for Shi'ah Muslims

Dhuhoor of Imam al-Mahdi

The *Dhuhoor* (appearance) of Imam al-Mahdi refers the end of the major occultation. It is when the Imam will no longer be hidden from people. A similar term, the *Khurooj* (re-emergence) of the Imam refers to when he will openly carry out the mission Allah has entrusted him with to spread justice and conquer injustice.

Major Events Leading up to and After the Dhuhoor

From the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (a), we can understand some of the major events that will take place leading up to and after the Dhuhoor:

1. As-Sayhah (the cry from heaven)

Close to the reappearance of the Imam, a caller will call from heaven and everyone on the earth will hear his call. The message will be inviting the people to the truth and supporting Imam Mahdi ('a). The elite companions of the Imam (a) will make their way towards the Imam.

It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (s) said: When it is time for the Khurooj of the Qaim, a caller will call from the heavens: Oh people, the era of rule of the tyrants over you has come to an end and the best of the nation of Muhammad has taken charge of the affair! Go to Mecca! At this time, the noble ones ….will go out. They are monks by night, lions during the day. It is if their hearts are blocks of iron. They will give him the oath of allegiance between the Rukn and Maqam [of Ibrahim (a) near the Ka'bah].

2. Army of as-Sufyani

Before the uprising of Imam al-Mahdi a man from the progeny of Abu Sufyan will have an uprising in the area of modern day Syria. He will capture part of the Islamic world. He will establish a prize for killing Shias of Ali (‘a). When the cry is made, as-Sufyani will have control of at least parts if not all of Syria, Jordan and Iraq. When he hears of the Imam’s reappearance he will send an army to capture or kill him. But his army will sink in the earth miraculously.

3. The Murder of an-Nafs al-Zakiyyah

This sign will take place shortly before the uprising of the Imam. According to some Ahadith there will only be 15 days between his murder and reappearance of the Imam. He will be killed in Masjid al-Haram. He will be from the progeny of the Prophet (s).

4. Emergence of the Imam

The Imam (a) will announce his reappearance from the Ka’bah. He will be gathered with 313 of his close companions from around the world (according to traditions, both men and women will be present). Some traditions indicate it will take place on the Day of Ashura. He will lean his back to the Ka’bah, and he will then deliver a sermon. His first words will be this verse: *Baqiyyatullah* (that which remains with Allah) is better for you, if you are believers. (Hood 11:86). Then he will say: *I am Baqiyyatullah in the earth*. The angel Jibraeel (a) and the 313 will pay allegiance to him there, and others will begin to gather. When ten thousand loyal soldiers have gathered there, the time for the Khurooj will have arrived.

After the reappearance of the Imam in Makkah, the oath of allegiance and formation of his initial army he will head to Madina, and then towards Kufah in Iraq.

5. Events that will take place in Iraq

In Iraq he will come across a group of people who apparently are religious but in reality they are enemies of the Imam and Islam. The Imam will speak to them and try to convince them with clear logical argument. This will have no affect on these hard-hearted people. After the Imam is unable to convince them and they refuse to accept the truth, a fight will take place and they will all be killed.

Another major event in Iraq will be his confrontation of al-Sufyani and his army. The Imam will be victorious and he will assume full control of Kufah.

The Imam will then make Kufah the capital of his global government. He will direct the liberation of the globe from Kufah. He will invite the oppressed of the world to Islam's life giving teachings and send armies to different places in the world to liberate the masses. After this, Hadrat Isa ('a) will descend from Heaven. He will return and pray behind the Mahdi. People will see that Imam al-Mahdi is superior to him and higher in spiritual rank and status. He will announce that he follows the Imam. Many of the Christians, whom form a large part of the world's population will start to believe in the Mahdi. Imam al-Mahdi will also show people of the world the unaltered version of the Torah and righteous Jews will begin to believe in the Imam. He will have artifacts from other prophets like the ring of Hadrat Sulayman, staff and bowl that Hadrat Musa would use for his sacrifice. The followers of other religions will see his kindness, policies, actions, the miracles and divine help and they will also begin to believe in the Imam. Islam will finally come to rule the world.

The people of world will be suffering from oppression and waiting for a savior. With the exception of the evil despots and their allies and those who refuse to stop being slaves to other humans, the rest of mankind will rejoice with arrival of their savior.

The World after the Victory of the Imam (a)

According to traditions, some of the outstanding features of the world after the Dhuhoor are as follows:

1. The entire world will be under the control of the righteous. There will be political, economic and social justice during his time. The Imam (a) will divide equally and deal with God's creation with justice. He will be just to both the righteous and the sinner.

2. Because world's wealth will be distributed properly, there will be no poverty. Actually there will be so much wealth that there will not be anyone to give Zakat to.

3. There will be unprecedented development of the earth without destroying

the ecosystem or the natural balance that Allah wants to be maintained. The Imam (a) will use the natural resources of the world in an ideal fashion in which everyone wins. The earth will cooperate with him and show its [hidden] treasures in such a way that the people will see them on its surface. The heavens will send down rain and the earth will send forth its best greenery and plants. People will also take advantage of the material benefits of this world in the best way possible. But material blessings will be used to get closer to God.

4. There will be complete security and all of the forms of apparent corruption and oppression will be removed.

5. The religion of Tawhid will spread throughout the earth. The Quran, prayers and Masajid will occupy their true place in the hearts and minds of people. Learning the Quran will become common culture and practice. Imam Ali ('a) said: It is as I am looking at our Shiites in the masjid of Kufah and they have set up tents and are teaching people Quran as it was revealed.

The Masajid will be the centers of learning and prayer is the pillar of the religion. During his reign, religious knowledge will grow in leaps and bounds. Imam Mahdi will make the people familiar with God and inspire the remembrance of God in the people's hearts. They will fear God and develop wonderful Akhlaq. They will finally escape the horror of worship of the self, following tyrants and obeying their enemy Satan and come to enjoy the pleasure of worshiping and serving God.

Questions for Review

1. Create a brief timeline that summarizes of major events that will take place with the coming of the Imam (a).
2. What is the difference between the Dhuhoor of the Imam (a) and his Khurooj?

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Lesson 20: About the Ghaybah

Learning Objectives
- Become familiar with the term 'Ghaybah' and some of the common questions surrounding it, such as the nature of the Ghaybah, the age of the Imam, and the wisdom behind the Ghaybah
- Understand why some people question the benefit of an Imam who is in Ghaybah
- Learn the responsibilities that the Imam fulfills directly despite being in the Ghaybah vs. the responsibilities he fulfills indirectly
- Know the means the Imam makes use to fufil some of his responsibilities indirectly

The Nature of the Ghaybah

Ghaybah means to be hidden. According to some traditions, the Imam is completely hidden from sight. Other traditions say that he is not hidden; rather he is amongst the people, but he can't be recognized. These two sets of traditions can be reconciled by saying that he is completely hidden from some people, but for others he can be seen but not recognized.

This does not mean that he can't be recognized by anyone at all. There are many people throughout history who have met the Imam (a) and recognized him, either at the time of meeting or later on.

Young Age of the Imam

How can the Imam (a) become an Imam at a young age of 5? Let us look at the Qur'an for guidance on this issue. The Qur'an tells us that Nabi Isa (a) spoke to his people when he was in the cradle as follows:

He said, "Indeed I am a servant of Allah! He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. He has made me blessed, wherever I may be, and He has enjoined me to] maintain [the prayer and to [pay] the zakat as long as I live, and to be good to my mother, and He has not made me self-willed and wretched. Peace is to me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive." (19:30-33)

Simlarly, Allah says that He appointed Nabi Yahya (a) as his prophet when Nabi Yahya was a child (19:12).

Other Imams (a) became Imams when they were young as well. Imam al-Jawad (a) became the Imam when he was around 8 years old, and Imam al-Hadi (a) when he was around 7 years old.

In summary, there is no minimum age limit when it comes to being the appointed Prophet or Imam. Allah knows best when it is appropriate for His representatives to assume this role.

Long Life of the Imam

How can the Imam be alive for more than a thousand years?

1) Allah is al-Qadeer (the All-Powerful) whose power extends over everything that is possible. Keeping a human being alive for hundreds or thousands of years is within the domain of possibility. Regarding Nabi Yunus (a), Allah says, “And had he not been one of those who celebrate Allah's glory, he would have surely remained in its belly till the day they will be resurrected.” (As-Saffaat 37:143-144). This is a clear statement that Allah can keep a human being alive until the Day of Resurrection even if the human being is in the belly of a whale!

2) There are other examples of human beings who have lived a long time. Nabi Nuh (a) lived amongst his people for 950 years (al-Ankaboot 29:14) before the Great Flood. He lived even longer than that.

Wisdom behind the Ghaybah

Why did Allah cause the Imam (a) to enter into the state of Ghaybah? There are several reasons, including:

- Allah decided that the Imam (a) will never swear allegiance to a false ruler, and so he has to be protected until the time comes where he will become the ruler.

- The Ghaybah was a means of protecting the life of the Imam (a). The Imams

before him were severely persecuted, abandoned by most of the people, and ultimately martyred by the caliph of the time. Allah decided there would be 12 Imams, and so the 12th Imam must be protected until he can establish justice throughout the earth.

- The Ghaybah of the Imam (a) is a test for the believers to see who will be steadfast in acknowledging his Imamah. Imam al-Baqir (a) said, "The deliverance [the coming of the Imam] will not take place until you are sifted, and then sifted, and then sifted, until the impure elements have gone away and only the pure remain."

The Prophet (s) said to Imam Ali (a), "O Ali! Those who have the most amazing faith and the greatest certainty are those who will come at the end of times - those who never saw their Prophet, and whose Imam will be in the Ghaybah, yet they will believe due to black on white (meaning due to what they have learnt from writings of wisdom)."

- The Ghaybah of the Imam (a) is partially due to the sins of believers. Imam Ali (a) said, "Know that the earth will never be empty of a Hujjah (Proof) from Allah. However, due to the injustice of people and their extremism, Allah will deprive them of the presence of the Hujjah."

- Even though we can understand some of the reasons behind the Ghaybah, the entire wisdom behind it is not apparent to us. It is a secret of Allah that will be revealed to us in due time. The Prophet (s) told Jabir b. Abdullah al-Ansari, "Indeed, this matter [of the Ghaybah] is Allah's affair and a secret from His secrets that is hidden from his servants." Imam as-Sadiq (a) said, "The wisdom behind the Ghaybah is the same wisdom behind the Ghaybah of other Proofs of Allah from the past. The reason for his Ghaybah will become clear after his reappearance, the same way that the actions of Khidr were not clear until they were about to part company."

Benefits of an Imam who is Ghaybah

People often ask, "Why is it beneficial to have an Imam whom we can't see among us? If the leader has left his people, how can it at all be useful for them to recognize him as the leader?"

(Note to teacher: prompt students to come up with answers before providing

them.)

The reason why people ask such a question is because:
a) they think that the only role of an Imam is to be a physically present, political leader of the Muslims.
b) they forget or don't pay attention to the fact that the Imam has appointed representatives to perform some of his responsibilities during the Ghaybah.

Let us look at the responsibilities of the Imam and how he fulfills them during the Ghaybah.

Responsibilities the Imam (a) performs directly during the Ghaybah

Even though the Imam is in Ghaybah, he is still directly involved with the spiritual life of his followers:

- He is Allah's representative on earth, responsible for upbringing and purifying his followers so that they can achieve the purpose for what they have been created for. (Note to teacher: Every time we receive any form of guidance, the Imam (a) is responsible for it, even though it might be coming in forms that we are not aware of his role. Go through examples that will illustrate this, such as hearing something in a lecture and being inspired, being encouraged by a friend to leave aside a bad habit, or feeling empowered to resist inclination towards committing a sin).

- He is a channel through which Allah sends His special blessings and mercy upon the rest of humanity.

- The Imam (a) prays for his followers

- The Imam (a) is a source of deflecting trials and tribulations (*balaa*) from the earth, and particularly from Muslims and the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

The Imam can fulfill those responsibilities even though he is in the Ghaybah. As a way of understanding this concept, the Ahlul Bayt (a) have used the analogy of the sun behind the clouds. For example, in a tradition, Imam as-Sadiq (a) was asked, "How can people benefit from an Imam who is not accessible?" He replied, "In the same way they benefit from the sun when clouds cover it." (Note to teacher: explore with students, on a scientific basis,

how a sun behind the clouds is still very beneficial, much more so than if it were to be dark at all times.)

Responsibilities the Imam performs indirectly

There are other responsibilities that an Imam performs that can only be fulfilled by being present physically among the people. During the Ghaybah, the Imam has appointed representatives to fulfill these responsibilities, such as:

- Being the leader of a society of believers. The Imam has left instructions that indicate that this responsibility to be fulfilled by an expert on Islam who is capable of leading people and who has a high level of *taqwa*.

- Teach the knowledge that the people need in order to achieve the purpose for what they have been created. This includes explaining the rules and other teachings of the religion for all times. In every age and every time, there are "new" issues that come up that didn't exist previously. We need people to explain the position of the religion on these issues. We also need people to protect the religion from corruption. The Imam has left instructions that indicate that this responsibility is to be fulfilled by the *maraji`*.

- Directly guiding people towards spiritual development and in order to become closer to Allah and the Ahlul Bayt (a). Even though the Imam (a) is the source of this guidance, during the Ghaybah, this responsibility lies with qualified, pious scholars.

Questions for Review

1- What is the meaning of Ghaybah? Does it mean that the Imam is hidden from sight?
2- The other Imams (a) did not have a Ghaybah like the Ghaybah of Imam al-Mahdi (a). Why is his situation unique?
3- What practical difference does it make for a Shi'ah to know that he/she has an Imam who is Ghaybah?
4- What responsibilities of the Imam (a) are assumed by others during the Ghaybah?
5- Study the reasons mentioned for the Ghaybah, and on the basis of these reasons, explain some of the responsibilities Shi'ahs who are awaiting the

Imam's reappearance have during the Ghaybah.
6. Look up the story of the people of the Cave in Surah al-Kahf (19), and explain how this story shows Allah's power over keeping human beings alive for a long period of time.

Lesson 21: Imam al-Mahdi (a) - Beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah

Learning Objectives
- Understand the main topics covered in traditions relating to Imam al-Mahdi (a) from books that are well-accepted by Sunni Muslims
- Identify the main differences in the beliefs of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims regarding Imam al-Mahdi (a)

Belief in Imam al-Mahdi (a) is not limited to just Shi'a Muslims. Books of traditions widely accepted by Sunni Muslims contain traditions that state the following:
- al-Mahdi (a) will come in the last days to make a universal Government
- al-Mahdi (a) is from the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet (S)
- al-Mahdi (a) is from the progeny of Fatimah (sa), the daughter of the Prophet (S)
- al-Mahdi (a) is different than Prophet Jesus (the Messiah)
- Prophet Jesus (a) will come as one of the followers of Imam al-Mahdi and will pray behind him in congressional prayer

Let us look at a few examples of these traditions.

The Prophet (S) said: "Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted and only one day is left (before the day of judgment), Allah will expand that day to such a length of time, as to accommodate the kingdom of a person from my Ahlul Bayt who will be called by my name. He will fill the earth with peace and justice as it will have been full of injustice and tyranny (by then)."

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v2, p86, v9, pp 74-75
- Sunan Abu Dawud, v2, p7
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, pp 84,376; V3, p63 and others.

The Prophet (S) said: "al-Mahdi is one of us, the members of the household (Ahlul-Bayt)." (Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4085)

These traditions show that Imam al-Mahdi (a) is from the Ahlul Bayt of Prophet Muhammad. That means he can not be Jesus (Nabi Isa, the Messiah). Thus, al-Mahdi and Messiah are two different personalities, but they will come at the same time, al-Mahdi as the Imam and Jesus as his follower. The following tradition clearly mentions that Imam al-Mahdi is one of descendants

of the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S):

The Prophet (S) said: The Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatimah (the Prophet's daughter).
ألمَهديُّ مِن عترتي من ولد فاطمة

- Sunan Abu Dawud, English version, Ch. 36, Tradition #4271 (narrated by Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet) - see https://sunnah.com/abudawud/38
- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4086
- al-Nisa'i and al-Bayhaqi, and others as quoted in: al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p249

Also:
The Prophet (S) said: "We the children of Abd al-Muttalib are the Masters of the inhabitants of the heaven: Myself, Hamza (ra), 'Ali (a), Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib (ra), al-Hasan (a), al-Husayn (a), and al-Mahdi (a)."

- Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #4087
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik and others.

The Prophet (S) said: "The Mahdi will appear in my Ummah. He will appear for a minimum of 7 or a maximum of 9 years; at that time, my Ummah will experience a bountiful favor like never before. It shall have a great abundance of food, of which it need not save anything, and the wealth at that time is in great quantities, such that if a man asks the Mahdi to give him some, and the Mahdi (a) will say: Here! Take!" (Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, Tradition #5083)

Note: According to Shi'i sources, the Government of Peace and equality that Imam al-Mahdi will establish will last hundreds of years with no rival, and then the day of Judgment will commence. What is mentioned in the above tradition as 7 or 9 years is the length of time that Imam al-Mahdi (a) will fight to conquer the world when he starts his mission.

The Messenger of Allah said: "The world will not perish until a man among the Arabs appears whose name matches my name." (Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v9, p74)

In Sahih Muslim, in the Chapter of al-Fitan, there are some interesting traditions on what will happen in the last days of the world:

Abu Nadra reported: We were with the company of Jabir Ibn Abdillah... Jabir Ibn Abdillah kept quiet for a while and then reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) having said: "There would be a Caliph in the last (period) of my Ummah who would freely give handfuls of wealth to the people without counting it."I said to Abu Nadra and Abu al-Ala: Do you mean Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz? They said: No, (he would be Imam Mahdi).

- Sahih Muslim, English version, v4, chapter MCCV, p1508, Tradition #6961
- Sahih Muslim, Arabic version, Kitab al-Fitan, v4, p2234, Tradition #67

(NOTE: What are inside the parentheses in the above tradition are NOT my comments. They are the words of the translator of Sahih Muslim (Abdul Hamid Siddiqui).)

Similarly, Abu Sa'id and Jabir Ibn Abdullah reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: "There would be in the last (phase) of the time a Caliph who would distribute wealth but would not keep count."

- Sahih Muslim, English version, v4, chapter MCCV, p1508, Tradition #6964
- Sahih Muslim, Arabic version, Kitab al-Fitan, v4, p2235, Tradition #69

It is also narrated: In the end of the time, my Ummah will undergo very hard affliction like never before, so that no one can find any way out. Then Allah will cause to appear a person from my progeny, that is my Ahlul Bayt, who will fill the earth with justice as it was filled with injustice. The inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heaven will love him. The sky will bring down its water everywhere and the earth will send all what it can offer and the land will become green all over.

- al-Sahih fi al-Hadith, by al-Hakim, as quoted in:
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p250

Ibn Majah in his Sunan quotes Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah and Imam 'Ali saying that the Holy Prophet (S) said: "al-Mahdi is from our Ahlul-Bayt, no doubt Allah will enforce his appearance within a night (i.e., his coming is very unpredictable and is very sudden)." (Sunan Ibn Majah, v2, p269)

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim that: Jabir Ibn Abdillah al-Ansari (ra) said: I

heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "A group of my Ummah will fight for the truth until near the day of judgment when Jesus, the son of Marry, will descend, and the leader of them will ask him to lead the prayer, but Jesus declines, saying: "No, Verily, among you Allah has made leaders for others and He has bestowed his bounty upon them."

- Sahih Muslim, Arabic, part 2, p193
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v3, pp 45,384

Ayatullah Lutfullah al-Safi al-Golpaygani, one of the senior-most Shi'a scholars alive today, has compiled an encyclopedia named "Muntakhab al-Athar". In this book, there is a comprehensive narration of the traditions regarding to the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (a) and the description of the world before and after his appearance. He has used over 60 Sunni sources, including the six major book of Hadith accepted by Sunnis, and over 90 Shi'ite sources to illuminate the fact that al-Mahdi is not a fabricated figure.

At least 35 prominent Sunni scholars have written 46 of books exclusively about Imam al-Mahdi (a).

In conclusion, the belief in the coming Mahdi (a) who is a person other than Jesus (a) is widely accepted by Sunni Muslims as well. The primary difference of opinion regarding the Imam (a) concerns the Ghaybah. Most Sunni scholars do not accept that the Imam is alive but in the Ghaybah. Rather, they believe that he will be born sometime in the future and that he will be a descendant of the Messenger of Allah (s).

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 22

Qur'an Reflection: Surat al-Bayyinah

Lesson 22: Reflection on the Qur'an

The following is a reflection tool developed by QFatima to help with reflecting on the Surahs of the Qur'an. The lesson for today includes:
-Recitation of Surat al-Bayyinah
-Reading a translation of this Surah
-Using the tool below to reflect on the messages of this Surah

AL-BAYYINA - THE UNDISPUTABLE CLEAR EVIDENCE
CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN DELIVERED BY A FLAWLESS PROPHET
CONNECT TO DIVINITY AND MANIFEST IT BY SERVING HIS CREATION
098
4
REWARD OF BELIEF AND ITS MANIFESTATION AS GOOD WORKS
Gardens of perpetuity
Allah pleased with them and they are pleased with Him
Best of creation
Ayaat 7-8
3
CONSEQUENCE OF COVERING UP THE TRUTH & OPPOSING THE PROPHET
Hell fire
Worst of creation
Aya 6
2
CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN – TRUE RELIGION
Serve Allah
Be sincere in religion (seek closeness to Divinity)
Be upright (Incline to the truth)
Establish salaa
Give zakaa
Aya 5
1
TRUTH CAUSED DIVISION IN THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK
When the clear evidence was presented to them, they divided because they perceived loss of leadership, power and prestige.
Ayaat 1-4

098. Al-Bayyina ~ The Undisputable Clear Evidence

8 Ayaat (Madani)

FOCUS

CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN DELIVERED BY A FLAWLESS PROPHET

CONNECT TO DIVINITY AND MANIFEST IT BY SERVING HIS CREATION

DID YOU KNOW?

THE TITLE BAYYINA DESCRIBES THE SURA'S PRINCIPAL MESSAGE OF INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE – THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN DELIVERED BY THE MESSENGER.

SELECTED AYAAT

98:2 A messenger from God, reciting pages that are pure.

98:3 Containing true scriptures (any subject that is recorded and becomes law).

98:4 Those who were given scriptures did not become divided until the clear evidence came to them.

98:5 Yet all they were commanded was to worship Allah, be sincere to Him in religion, be upright in truth, establish salaa and give zakaa; this is the true religion.

NARRATIVE

The chapter begins with an assertion that those who covered up the truth will not stop opposing the Prophet until there was clear indisputable evidence.

Divinity responds with Bayyina (Undisputable clear evidence) which is a flawless Prophet reciting Divine signs with such clarity that there was no room for ambiguity.

The chapter ends contrasting the fate of those who covered up the truth and opposed to the `prophet to those who believed.

Grade 11

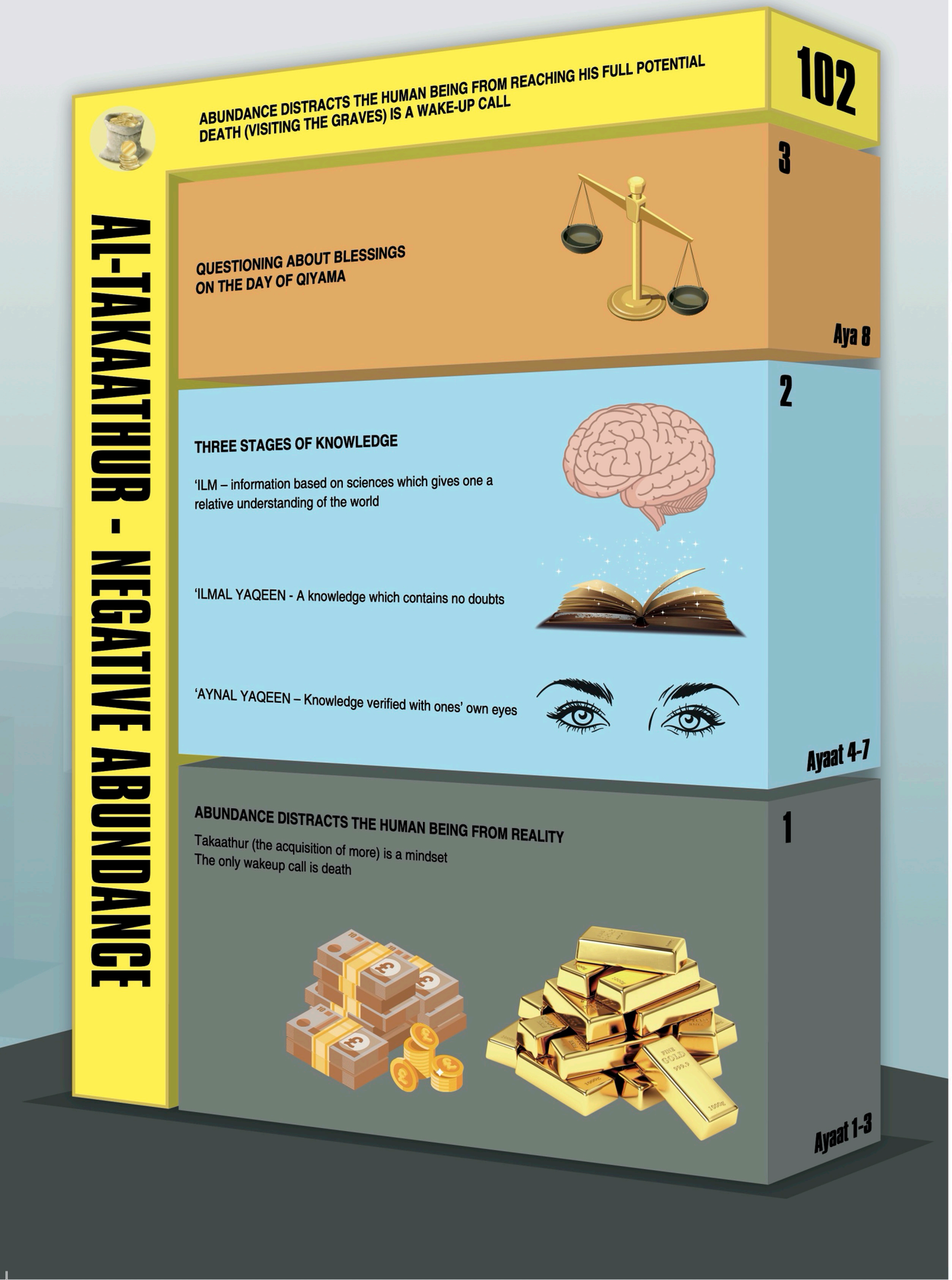
Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 23

Qur'an Reflection: Surat al-Takathur

Lesson 22: Reflection on the Qur'an

The following is a reflection tool developed by QFatima to help with reflecting on the Surahs of the Qur'an. The lesson for today includes:
-Recitation of Surat al-Takathur
-Reading a translation of this Surah
-Using the tool below to reflect on the messages of this Surah


AL-TAKAATHUR - NEGATIVE ABUNDANCE
ABUNDANCE DISTRACTS THE HUMAN BEING FROM REACHING HIS FULL POTENTIAL
DEATH (VISITING THE GRAVES) IS A WAKE-UP CALL
102
3
QUESTIONING ABOUT BLESSINGS
ON THE DAY OF QIYAMA
Aya 8
2
THREE STAGES OF KNOWLEDGE
'ILM – information based on sciences which gives one a relative understanding of the world
'ILMAL YAQEEN - A knowledge which contains no doubts
'AYNAL YAQEEN – Knowledge verified with ones' own eyes
Ayaat 4-7
1
ABUNDANCE DISTRACTS THE HUMAN BEING FROM REALITY
Takaathur (the acquisition of more) is a mindset
The only wakeup call is death
Ayaat 1-3

102. Al-Takaathur ~ Negative Abundance

8 Ayaat (Makki)

FOCUS

ABUNDANCE DISTRACTS THE HUMAN BEING FROM REACHING HIS FULL POTENTIAL

DEATH (VISITING THE GRAVES) IS A WAKE-UP CALL

DID YOU KNOW?

UNLIKE KAWTHAR WHICH DENOTES POSITIVE ABUNDANCE; TAKAATHUR IMPLIES NEGATIVE ABUNDANCE – THAT WHICH CAUSES ARROGANCE AND PERCEIVED INDEPENDENCE FROM THE CREATOR

THE CHAPTER WAS ALSO CALLED THE SURA OF THE GRAVE BY SOME COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

SELECTED AYAAT

102:1 Your rivalry for abundance and power distracts you.

102:2 Until you reach the graves.

102:8 Then surely on that day you will be questioned about your blessings.

NARRATIVE

The chapter takes its title from the first verse which begins with the distraction from reality that the competition of wanting more wealth and children does.

Historically it referred to the clans of the Quraysh who competing with each other even counted their dead to prove that they were greater in the size of their clans.

The first two verses speak of the delusion of hoarding wealth whilst the remaining verses promise that those who persist in such behaviour will bear the consequences of the fire with certainty.

Grade 11

Stream: Aqaid/History

Lesson Sequence: 24-32

Lessons from the Lives of the Prophets (as)

1. Pr Adam (as)
2. Pr Nuh (as)
3. Pr Ibrahim (as)
4. Pr Musa (as)
5. Pr Isa (as)
6. Pr Sulayman (as)

السَّلامُ عَلى آدَمَ صَفْوَةِ اللهِ

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS:

ADAM [A.S]

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Be reminded that Prophet Ādam (as) is the first prophet and the first human being that Allah (SWT) created.**
- **Know that the creation of Eve was from the 'human soul' not from Adam's rib**
- **Know the exact Qur'anic wording for the process of creation**
- **Understand the reaction of the angels and why God ordered them to prostrate to Adam and how this is related to free will.**
- **Understand and analyse the reaction of Satan and its basis in pride and the dangers of this**
- **Understand the mistake of Adam and why it was not a sin with a clear understanding of the difference between obligatory and guiding commands**

PROPHET ĀDAM (AS) - THE FIRST HUMAN BEING

All Abrahamic religions (including Muslims) believe that Prophet Ādam (as) was the very first human being created. The details of his creation and the resulting beliefs that come out of this have influenced the core of many religions. For instance, it is the story of Ādam and Eve that makes the Christians believe in the "original sin" or the inferior status of women. Fortunately, from the incredible miracle of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, as Muslims we do not believe in these concepts. This lesson shall attempt to give an overview of the story of Ādam (as) from the perspective for the Qur'an and we will learn the most significant message from this story which is the evils of pride.

THE CREATION OF ĀDAM AND EVE (AS)

Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an in various places describes the creation of human beings:

> "We created man of an extraction of clay, then We set him, a drop, in a receptacle secure, then We created of the drop a clot, then We created of the clot a tissue, then We created of the tissue bones, then We garmented the bones in flesh; thereafter We produced him as another creature. So blessed be God, the fairest of creators!" (23:12–14)

Allah (SWT) has created human Beings in an extremely precise manner with each stage a wondrous miracle. We believe that human beings were created from clay as Allah (SWT) says about the creation of Prophet Ādam (as)

> "And when your Lord said to the angels `See, 'I am creating a mortal of clay of mud moulded. When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him, fall you down, bowing before him!" (16:28–29)

We have to remember that many of these words of the Qur'an cannot be interpreted literally. Allah (SWT) does not have a mouth to blow for instance but because of the limited nature of our language Allah (SWT) in His wisdom has explained it as such. We also believe that all human beings were created in this manner and that Eve, was *not* created from the rib of Ādam like the Christians believe.

THE ANGELS PROSTRATE TO ĀDAM (AS)

As we read in the last verse, the angels were commanded to prostrate to Ādam (as). Let us read the story from the Holy Qur'an:

"And [after creating Ādam] Allah taught Ādam all the names. Then He presented those to the angels and said, "Tell me the names of these if you are true. They said, "Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are surely the All-Knowing, the Wise." [Then] He said, "O Ādam! Tell them the names of those [persons]." When Ādam told them those names, Allah said [to the angels], "Didn't I say to you that I know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you manifest and what you hide."

And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Ādam." All of them prostrated except Iblīs, who refused and was haughty, and [thus] he became one of the unbelievers.

"[After creating Eve), We said, "O Ādam, Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat from it [freely] as many [things] as you wish; but do not approach this tree, otherwise you will become one of the dhalimīn اَلظَّالِمِيْنَ."

"But the Satan made them slip (اَزَلَّهُما) from that [Garden by luring them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree] and thus got them out from the state [of felicity] in which they had been."

So We said [to Ādam, Eve, and the Satan that, "All of you] get down [from the Garden to the earth] some of you being the enemies of the other, and there is on the earth your abode and the necessities [of life] for a [fixed period of] time." [Ādam felt ashamed and intended to ask Allah's forgiveness.] So Ādam learnt some words from his Lord, and Allah turned to him mercifully (تَابَ عَلَيْهِ). Surely He is the Most- Forgiving, the Merciful. We said, "All of you get down from the Garden. [Once you are on the earth], a guidance will certainly come to you from Me: whosoever follows My guidance, there will be no fear for them nor shall they grieve. But those who disbelieve and reject Our revelation, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide."

We learn several things from this story

1. Allah (SWT) created Ādam (as) with a special knowledge. The angles thought they knew everything but were embarrassed when Allah (SWT) informed them that Ādam (as) knew more than them. We have to remember that we cannot become haughty and proud about what we know and even if we do we have to become humble when the truth is shown to us.
2. Iblīs refused to concede to the truth because of his arrogance and pride. Even though all the others prostrated, he did not. Later in this lesson we shall discuss the evils of pride.
3. Allah (SWT) created Eve (*not* from the rib of Ādam) and they lived in a Garden (*not* in heaven) but on Earth. They were asked not to approach a tree. This was a recommendation not an order. In Islam, there are two types of commands Allah (SWT) gives to His creation:[i]
   a. **Legislative command** (Al-'amr al-mawlawi,): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command which has to be fulfilled and failure to do so results in punishment. (eg. Ṣalāt)
   b. **Guiding command** (Al-'amr al-'irshādi): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command but the action to be done is not Wājib, rather the command is simply a guiding command which is meant to make life for that person easier. Not doing that action does not result in sin but may have natural consequences. This is the kind of order Prophet Ādam (as) got regarding the tree.
4. The natural consequence of Prophet Ādam (as) making that mistake was that him and his wife had to leave the garden and now had to face the normal difficulties of life.
5. Prophet Ādam (as) sought forgiveness for his mistake and Allah (SWT) forgave him and gave him the great news of guidance.

Memorisation Activity

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ

وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Ādam, and so they prostrated, but Iblīs (did it not). He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers." (2:34)

IBLĪS (SATAN) WAS PROUD AND ARROGANT

As we have just read the story of Prophet Ādam (as), we learn that the most significant message to come out of this story was the deception and pride of Iblīs. Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him licence for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds." (That is pride and arrogance).[ii]

Satan thought he was better than Prophet Ādam (as) and despite being shown the truth he was stubborn and arrogant. If we show any such characteristics in our lives, we can be put in the same category as Satan on the day of judgement.

There are three main types of pride

1. **Arrogance against Allah (SWT)**: this is disbelief (kufr). It is like what Satan did. We can be arrogant against Allah (SWT) when we do not follow Allah's (SWT) command purposefully or when we question His laws and commands, because we think we know better.
2. **Arrogance against the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Imams (as):** Where we think we know more than them and accuse them of making wrong decisions for instance. This applies also to the Ālim (scholar).
3. **Arrogance against other people**: This is where we think we are better than others for any reason whether it be nationalistic, due to our wealth, our possessions, our knowledge etc.

Each of these types of arrogance is forbidden in Islam and would cause us to be associated with Satan in Hell. Allah has kept a simple law as a punishment for those who are arrogant. The Holy Prophet has said:

"One who humbles himself before Allah is raised by Him in status; and the one who is arrogant will be degraded by Allah."[iii]

Let's see an example of this.
A scholar narrated: "I was at the sacred Mecca, between Ṣafa and Marwah when I saw a stranger on a camel. His slaves were preventing the people from coming near him. After sometime I happened to be in Baghdad. There I saw a man in a dishevelled condition with his hair awry. I stared at him in surprise. He asked as to why I was staring at him. I said that I find a great resemblance between him and an arrogant person whom I had seen at Mecca between Ṣafa and Marwah. At that time he behaved very arrogantly. The man said, "I am the same person! I had behaved arrogantly at a place where people exhibit humility, that is why the Almighty has made me lowly in Baghdad where people achieve great honours. And thus these people behave arrogantly towards me."

SIGNS OF PRIDE

1) If in gatherings and social events a person dislikes not being in a position of leadership or being the centre of attention.
2) If one finds it difficult to say salām or show humility a person lower than him in social status, he is proud.
3) If it is difficult for one to accept the invitation of poor people or to sit with beggars it is a sign of pride.
4) If he feels it is below his dignity to perform physical and unclean work such as sweeping the floor or cleaning a bathroom or something similar

The punishment of those who are proud is, as promised by Allah (SWT), very severe. We have to always remember the story of Prophet Ādam (as) and always be humble and not arrogant and haughty.

Class Activity

Can you identify other types of arrogance and pride you have experienced in your life?

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Ādam (as) disobeyed a command of Allah that was:

a. Legislative
b. A guiding command
c. Both of the above

Q2. Eve was created:

a. By Allah (SWT) from the human soul as all humans are created
b. From the Rib of Ādam (as)
c. From an angel

Q3. Pride is bad because:

a. It is the source of all other evil acts
b. Satan was proud
c. It destroys all good actions
d. All the above

[i] eHawza – Ancient Prophets for the Modern World- Prophet Adam (as) – Sem 2
[ii] Nahjul Balagha Sermon 192
[iii] Greater Sins (Dastagahaib Shirazi) chapter 3- Pride

السَّلامُ عَلى نوُحٍ نَبِيِ اللهِ

PROPHET NūH[A.S]

نبي الله نوح (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Review Prophet Noah's position as one of the great law-making Prophets**
- **Review the details of Prophet Noah's mission, particularly focusing on his forbearance**
- **Discuss the importance of the quality of perseverance on the right path (al IstiqÁmah)**
- **Discuss goal-setting, overcoming challenges and having determination**

Prophet Nūḥ (Noah as)

"It was said to Noah: disembark with peace from us and blessings" "Greetings (from Allah) upon Noah from among the creation" (37:79)

Prophet Noah was one of the very earliest Prophets sent by Allah (SWT) to a people who were worshipping idols and who had gone astray in their actions and beliefs.

"Surely We sent Noah to his people, saying: Warn your people before there come upon them a painful chastisement"

The Qur'an tells us that Prophet Noah was sent specifically to his people and not people in general. Prophet Noah was therefore was a prophet and a messenger, who received revelation and had the responsibility of guiding his people to the right path.

Prophet Noah is also one of the five principal law making (ūlūl 'azm) Prophets who came with a message and a book of laws for people to follow.

PROPHET NOAH: AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance means to have steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose or a state especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. This means not giving up on the truth, no matter how difficult it becomes. Prophet Noah was one man who never gave up on his mission to guide his people to the right path. Let's see how the Allah (SWT) shows Prophet Noah's perseverance in the Qur'an.

Prophet Noah has been introduced to us as a symbol of patience. The reason behind this is that he was preaching the message of Allah (SWT) for 950 years, with only 80 people believing in him. The Qur'an says he was a prophet who used very sound arguments to convince and guide his people – he used common sense and logic, kind words and was very gentle and compassionate to his people. However, even after so many years to teaching and preaching, not many people listened to him.

All of his followers were poor people, because the wealthy people were too proud to listen to what Prophet Noah (as) has to say. He told his people,

"Worship only Allah (SWT). There is no God but Him. Otherwise, I fear that you will see the punishment of a painful day." (7:59)

The chiefs of the people laughed at Prophet Noah (as). One of their leaders stepped forth and said: 'you are nothing but a man like us. We don't see anything special about you. You have only a few followers and they are the

poorest and the lowest from among us. We do not think that you are better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar!'

The chiefs thought that just because they had a lot of money, they were better than Prophet Noah (as) and his followers. They used this as an excuse not to believe in Islam. The leaders of the town became upset and angry because Prophet Noah (as) had made very good and convincing arguments but one of the chiefs finally said, '0, Noah! You have argued with us so many times and we still don't care what you say. We don't believe you.'

The Qur'an then describes what Prophet Noah felt after so much effort and time with these stubborn people:

"He said: O my Lord! Surely I have called my people by night and by day! And whenever I have called them that You may forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, cover themselves with their garments, and persist and are puffed up with pride: Then surely I called to them aloud: Then surely I spoke to them in public and I spoke to them in secret..."

After preaching and being patient for 950 years, Prophet Noah's people reached such a stage that they would not believe anymore. Allah (SWT) knew in His Knowledge that not one more of Prophet Noah's people would come to believe. In addition to this, Prophet Noah's people asked and egged on Prophet Noah to bring on the punishment. At this stage, Prophet Noah prayed for Allah (SWT) to punish these people.

Allah (SWT) only punished them when He knew that not even one more of them would believe if they were given more time. In fact, if they had been given more time, they would also mislead those who had already believed. When this happened, Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Noah to build an ark. His people started mocking and ridiculing him. He simply kept quiet and kept doing his job.

Prophet Noah then asks Allah (SWT) to not leave any trace of them on the Earth:

"And Noah said: My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers"

Then a huge flood began. Even after the flood began, people were given a chance to embark on the ark. Meanwhile the Qur'an says that Noah was ordered to take with him his family (except his son), a pair of each domestic animal and the believers who believed in Noah (as).

"Until when Our command came and water came forth from the valley, We said: Carry in it two of all things, a pair, and your own family-- except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And there believed not with him but a few."

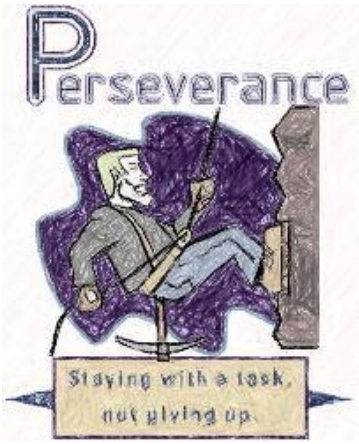
Allah (SWT) therefore destroyed all the disbelievers including the son of Prophet Noah who refused to believe in Allah (SWT), by drowning them in the flood and saving Prophet Noah and those who believed, with the Ark that was built.

AL-ISTIQĀMAH

It is important to note the difference between perseverance and effort. There are some people who do make efforts in the beginning, yet they break down when confronted with difficulties. The important thing, therefore, is that we do not just start a task and then give up easily. Instead, we should keep our motivation and determination and overcome any obstacles we might face and work through them. This is what we learn from the story of Prophet Noah.

persevere

to persist in anything undertaken; maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty, obstacles, or discouragement; continue steadfastly.



Every triumph is not of the same kind. Sometimes it arrives early and sometimes it takes a long time. One must not expect that everything would be done in the same manner and that everything will end in success.

So if success does not arrive early one must not give up efforts. One must not imagine that victory is impossible and very difficult.

A great Muslim scholar narrates the following story: 'I have learnt firm determination from an insect called 'Bijju'. Once I was sitting near a clean and shining pillar in the Masjid when I observed that a tiny insect was attempting to climb the upright stone pillar to reach a lamp that was on the top. I kept sitting the whole night and observing until dawn how relentlessly that insect was

struggling to climb up the slippery column. I counted 700 attempts when he was falling down from the middle of the path because the pillar was very smooth and glassy. His legs could not hold on. I was extremely astonished to see the extraordinary determination of that little worm. As it was time for Fajr Prayer I got up from my place, made ablution and engaged myself in worship. After concluding my prayers I looked back toward the pillar to find to my absolute astonishment that, as a result of its perseverance and untiring effort the insect had achieved its aim and was sitting close to the burning light!"

THE ROLE OF PERSEVERANCE IN LEARNING

The story of a famous seventh century Muslim scholar, 'Sakkaki', is also very interesting. He began to study at the age of thirty. Though his teachers were not at all hopeful of his success he continued his study with wonderful zeal and enthusiasm. With a view to test the extent of his intelligence a teacher once posed a problem of jurisprudence before him.

The teacher said: 'the teacher says that the skin of a dog becomes clean and pure by pounding.' Sakkaki was supposed to learn this sentence by heart. So he repeated it many times and became ready to recite it when called for. The next day the teacher asked him to recite the sentence in front of all the other students. He stood up at once to say: 'The dog says the teacher's skin becomes clean and pure by pounding." Hearing this, everyone, including the teacher, burst into laughter.

Yet the aged pupil's determination was so sound that despite this experience he did not give up his study, but followed the same course for another ten years. Of course, due to advancing age, his grasping power was becoming weak day by day.

Once he had gone to the forest to study where he noticed that drops of rainwater constantly fell on a rock and made marks on that hard stone. He thought over it and told himself, "My heart is not harder than this rock. If drops of knowledge fall on it constantly like these raindrops they too would certainly leave imprints on it, at least to some extent." He returned home and began to study with added zeal.

At last, as a result of his untiring and continuous efforts and non-stop endeavour he became a distinguished personality of the literary circles of the Arab world. He authored a book, which was, for many years, a textbook in the course of Arabic education.

[i]Therefore, perseverance and uprightness are among the distinctive features of a believer. Allah (SWT) has given glad tidings to those who observe fortitude and perseverance in their affairs. In fact, this is the best means of leading one's life. Then one who wishes to succeed in this world and hereafter must embrace these characteristics.

Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"One who is steadfast (perseveres) shall get Paradise, but the one who is afflicted with doubt and disbelief shall get the fire."[ii]

Review Questions

Q1. How long did Prophet Noah guide and preach his people for:

a. 2000 years
b. 950 years
c. 300 years

Q2. Why did Prophet Noah's son also get punished and drown?

a. He disbelieved in Allah (SWT)
b. He thought he could swim out of the flood
c. He tried to save other people

Q3. What is the most important lesson we learn from Prophet Noah's Life?

a. That we should always remain firm and persevere in the path of Allah
b. That we should train our children to be more obedient
c. That we should pray to Allah to punish the bad people immediately

[i] REFERENCES

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- The Story of Prophet Noah - http://en.rafed.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3074:prophet-noah&catid=361:the-prophets&Itemid=865

[ii] *(Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 119)*

السَّلامُ عَلى إبراهيمَ خَليلِ اللهِ

Prophets Abraham (Ibrāhīm) [A.S]

Lesson 1: Abraham's (as) Bravery

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Review the status of Prophet Abraham by discussing how he is described in the Holy Qur'an**
- **Research the qualities of Prophets and trustees of God explained in the Holy Qur'an**

PROPHET ABRAHAM (AS) IN THE QUR'AN

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Abraham (as) was one of the greatest prophets in history. He is known as the 'Father of Monotheism', a title that emphasises the amazing role he played in inviting people to the worship of Allah (SWT). In this regard, the Qur'an so eloquently describes him in the following way:

"Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters" (16:120)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

This great prophet has been mentioned 69 times in the Holy Qur'an in over 25 chapters with one chapter named after him. Indeed, Allah (SWT) through this Prophet has taught us numerous lessons some of which we have come across in previous studies. Allah (SWT) tested Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) with various tests, and every time he passed those tests, Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) was given titles by Allah (SWT) Himself!

In this lesson, we will focus on several of the titles given to Prophet Abraham (as). The purpose of this study is so that we can see what qualities are required for a person to have such a great guiding influence on the world, both in his time and for millennia to follow.

SUBMISSION

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"When his Lord said to him, Submit!, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds." (2:131)

Here, the submission of Prophet Abraham (as) is praised. Submission of one thing to another is when the former does not disobey or repel the latter.

The base for all of Prophet Abraham's great qualities is his absolute and complete submission to Allah (SWT). This is demonstrated throughout his life: his solitary opposition to his people and their idol-worship, his migration from his home country to a strange land, his settling of his family in a barren and sparsely populated land and finally his willingness to sacrifice his son.

TRUTHFULNESS

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

"And mention in the Book Abraham; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet."

Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) is truthful in many respects, the most important of which is that he stood for the True belief in the Allah, the One Lord. He not only believed in this Truth, but he did whatever was possible to teach, spread and act according to this Truth. The importance of this quality is emphasised by the fact that it is mentioned before he is even introduced as a prophet in this āyah.

BRAVERY

We have discussed the bravery of Prophet Abraham (as) in previous years. One great manifestation of his bravery is the destruction of the idols that his people worshipped, without fear of the consequences of this for his personal safety:

"Then he started striking them down with his right hand" (37:93).

WISE PREACHING

Prophet Abraham (as) used many different approaches with his people. At times, he was direct, telling them in simple words that they were worshipping idols who could not harm or benefit them. At other times, he would take action to show them the falsity of their views in a practical way, such as when he urges them to ask the main idol if it had destroyed the other idols. At yet other times, he would use a more subtle approach, by seemingly agreeing with a group of people before logically disproving their false beliefs.

"So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; said he: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: I do not love the setting ones… "(6:76)

STRENGTH AND INSIGHT

وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ

"And remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight." (38:45)

This āyah indicates that Prophet Abraham (as) possessed strength and ability when it came to obeying Allah (SWT). This is explained in other parts of the Qur'an as being engaged in virtuous action, prayer, charity and worship.

Insight refers to the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In the case of Prophet Abraham (as), this also meant being ma'ṣūm, as in another part of the Qur'an Allah (SWT) says:

"and We revealed to them the doing of good" (21:73)

This indicates that all the actions of Prophet Abraham (as) and other Prophets were guided by revelation or inspiration from Allah (SWT).

While we are not able to receive revelation, we can purify our souls through virtuous deeds so that we may receive a lower form of guidance from Allah (SWT) that leads us to further virtuous action and helps us achieve wisdom and insight.

FORBEARANCE AND COMPASSION

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ

Most surely Abraham was forbearing, compassionate, oft-returning (to Allah) (11:75) (76)

The context of the above āyah is amazing. The angels visit Abraham (as) and inform of the good news that he is going to be granted a child. After this, they inform him that their next mission is to visit the community of Prophet Lot and bring down God's punishment upon them. When Prophet Abraham (as) hears this, he begins to plead with the angels to delay the punishment upon this community. He also expresses his concern that Prophet Lot is still among that community.

Allah (SWT) praises Prophet Abraham (as) greatly for this action. He describes him in three ways:

- Forbearing: meaning he was not quick to punish people or ask for them to be punished. Rather, he remained patient and wanted to give people respite
- Compassionate: the misguidance of people would affect him severely, such that he would be in pain and distress out of concern for people
- Oft-returning: he would turn to Allah (SWT) when distressed by these things

This āyah shows that forbearance and compassion are among the traits of a leader. A leader is patient and caring for his community, and does not quickly give up on them.

DISASSOCIATION FROM DISBELIEVERS

Prophet Abraham's (as) compassion and forbearance should not be misunderstood. While he did not pray for disbelievers to punished and cared about their guidance, at the same time, he willingly cut his relations with stubborn disbelievers in an attempt to show them the falsity of their beliefs and forbid them from evil.

He is praised for this action more than once in the Qur'an, and we are specifically commanded to take him as a role model when it comes to this issue.

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَآءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ

"Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people: Surely we are clear of you and of what you serve besides Allah; we declare ourselves to be clear of you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you forever until you believe in Allah alone…" (60:4)

This āyah perfectly captures the approach of Prophet Abraham (as): once his people showed themselves to be stubborn to the truth and continued with false beliefs and evil actions, he cut relations with him and even showed enmity to them. However, despite this, he left the door open to them to repent and return saying 'until you believe in Allah…' This shows that he never lost hope in people and always hoped they would be guided.

CARE FOR COMING GENERATIONS

One of the points repeatedly emphasised in relation to Prophet Abraham (as) in the Qur'an is his care for future generations. He often prays for his offspring:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَٰذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

"And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols" (14:35)

He requests Allah (SWT) to make his offspring leaders like himself:

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

"And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He." (2:124)

Most importantly, he advised his offspring to remain on the path of Truth and worship of Allah, the One Lord:

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

"And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did) Jacob. O my sons! Surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims." (2:132)

This is a more specific aspect of the compassionate guidance of Prophet Abraham (as). He was concerned about not only his current generation, but the generations to come after him. Besides his general concern, he was also specifically concerned about his own offspring, due to his greater responsibility towards them.

There are great lessons here for us too. We should have a long-term approach and vision when it comes to the guidance of a community, considering not only the current generation but those to come. We also learn that we should focus on our own children and grandchildren, because if all parents focused on the guidance of their children, this would lead to a society which has a pious and virtuous future generation.

THE STATUS OF PROPHET ABRAHAM (AS)

The qualities that this great prophet displayed meant that he made some great achievements. He is described in the following āyat as:

- Reaching certainty
- Seeing the unseen world of malakūt
- Achieving the status of Imamat
- Being a nation unto himself

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ

"And thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are certain." (6:75)

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

"And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He." (2:124)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters" (16:120)

There are many lessons for us in the life of Prophet Abraham (as). In this lesson, we have considered some of the lessons related to the qualities that led to him having such a great influence and legacy. If we hope to be leaders, and to have a legacy that beyond our own lifetime, then we should respond to the command of the Holy Qur'an to take Prophet Abraham (as) as a role model.

السَّلامُ عَلى موسى كَلِيمِ اللهِ

Prophet Mūsā[A.S]

نبي الله موسى(ع)

Lesson 1: Mūsā Kalīmu Allah

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Lesson 1

- **Briefly review a summary of Prophet Mūsā's mission**
- **Discuss the title of Prophet Mūsā' (as): Kalīmu Allah**
- **Discuss in detail the incident of God speaking to Prophet Mūsā (as)**
- **Discuss the important role of Aaron (as) in Prophet Mūsā's (as) message**
- **Discuss the similarities in their relationship between that of Prophet Muḥammad and Imam 'Ali**
- **Discuss the wisdom behind Prophet Mūsā's (as) request for his mission to be shared with his brother**
- **Discuss the importance of brotherhood and having a partner on a spiritual journey**
- **Discuss the wisdom of God giving his message to 'families'**
- **Discuss the incident of Prophet Mūsā's (as) departure and the Israelites worship of the golden calf,**
- **Briefly review the struggles of Prophet Mūsā's (as) with his people after crossing the sea**
- **Discuss the Qur'an's teachings on Judaism and the Israelite people**

THE MISSION OF MUSA (AS)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Mūsā (as) was sent to Egypt with two missions:

1. To call the people to worship the One True God.
2. To stop the Pharaoh from oppressing the Children of Israel (Bani Israel) and using them as slaves.

This was met with the refusal of the Pharaoh and his followers, and after enduring many hardships in trying to guide them, Prophet Mūsā (as) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to take the Bani Israel and flee by night. The Pharaoh and his army pursued them till the edge of the sea where Prophet Mūsā's (as) community where they thought they are trapped. However, Prophet Mūsā (as) demonstrated his uncompromising trust in Allah (SWT), saying:

"He said: By no means; surely my Lord is with me: He will show me a way out…" (26:62)

It was only after he said this that Allah (SWT) commanded him to strike the sea with his staff, and Allah divided the sea, saving Prophet Mūsā (as) and the believers, and drowning Pharaoh and his army. The Children of Bani Israel were now free.

They were no longer slaves and could head back to their homeland of Palestine and practice the True Religion of

submission to Allah. However, even after crossing the sea and freeing his people, the struggles of Prophet Mūsā (as) did not end.

MŪSĀ (AS) - KALĪMU ALLAH

وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا

"And to Moses Allah spoke a kind of speaking." (4:164)

A special title of Prophet Musa (as) is 'Kalīmu Allah', which means ''the one who was spoken to by Allah (SWT)". This is because Allah (SWT) 'spoke' to him in a unique manner. Perhaps the best way to explain it is to say that Allah (SWT) did this by causing soundwaves to emanate from a burning tree. Allah (SWT) only speaks to human beings in three ways:

1. By revelation
2. From behind a veil
3. By sending a messenger to reveal what He Wills.

It is important to remember that Allah (SWT) certainly did not enter the tree somehow or take on any physical form. Allah (SWT) is beyond matter, and is too Exalted for such an event. Rather, He simply caused sound to emanate from a tree in a unique way.

Prophet Mūsā (as) and his family (as) had left Madyan at night and were on their way towards Egypt. Prophet Mūsā (as) then saw a fire in the distance, and told his family to stop and wait till he goes to the fire. When he reached near it, a voice came from the tree:

"... O Mūsā: Surely I am your Lord, therefore put off your shoes; surely you are in the sacred valley, Ṭuwa, And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance: Surely the hour is coming– I am about to make it manifest-- so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives: Therefore let not him who believes not in it and follows his low desires turn you away from it so that you should perish; And what is this in your right hand, O Mūsā! He said: This is my staff: I recline on it and I beat the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it. He said: Cast it down, O Mūsā! So he cast it down; and lo! it was a serpent running. He said: Take hold of it and fear not; We will restore it to its former state: And press your hand to your side, it shall come out white without evil: another sign: That We may show you of Our greater signs: Go to Pharaoh, surely he has exceeded all limits." (20:11-24)

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF THIS CONVERSATION

- The command "to take off the shoes" is interpreted as a mark of humility for self and respect for Allah, or to renounce the thought of family, so as to be present before the Lord in utter devotedness and concentration of heart and mind.
- The conversation between Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mūsā (as) is like a conversation between two close friends who love one another. Some of these signs include:
  - Allah (SWT) uses the first person repeatedly
  - Allah (SWT) describes Himself to Prophet Mūsā (as) as 'your Lord' rather than 'the Lord'. All this is to emphasise the close relationship
  - Allah (SWT) says: 'I have chosen you'. In other parts of the Qur'an, Allah (SWT): 'I have fashioned you for myself'
  - Allah (SWT) asks Prophet Mūsā (as) a question to which the answer is obvious (what is in your right hand?) Prophet Mūsā's (as) answer in turn is quite long. Some of our scholars indicate that the purpose of the question and the long answer despite the obviousness is to prolong the conversation between the two intimate friends.

Review Questions

1. **Undertake further research and explain the meaning of God 'speaking' to the Prophet**

Lesson 3: Struggles with the Israelites

RESISTANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The community of Prophet Mūsā (as) brought much pain and grief to him on a variety of occasions:

- When they saw a group of people worshipping idols, they asked Prophet Mūsā (as) to make for them an idol to worship. They also asked him to show Allah (SWT) to them. They did not realise that Allah (SWT) was beyond vision and hearing and shape.[2]

- Asking for a variety of foods: as the Children of Israel travelled through the desert towards Palestine, Allah (SWT) supplied them with fresh meat and pleasant sweet food (al-mann wal salwah). However, soon, they began to complain, asking Prophet Mūsā (as) to provide them with a variety of foods such as onions, garlic and so on. This was a sign of their rejection (and ungratefulness) of the blessings of Allah (SWT).[3]

- Refusing to fight to regain their land from idolaters: Upon reaching the promised land of Palestine, almost all of the community refused to fight to remove the occupiers (who were fierce warriors) despite the promise of victory from Allah (SWT), and even mocked Prophet Mūsā (as). As punishment for this, Allah (SWT) made them to wander the desert as a homeless tribe for forty years.[4]

- Worshipping the Calf: the people began to worship the cow made of gold by al-Sāmiri after Prophet Mūsā (as) was late in returning to them.[5]

- Their persistent, futile questions: there is a famous incident related in the Holy Qur'an which shows the attitude of the children of Israel. It so happened that a person among them was killed, but his murdered could not be found. So they came to Prophet Mūsā (as) for judgment. He ordered them to slaughter a cow, and that if they did so, he could resurrect the dead person who could then reveal his murdered. Instead of following this simple order, they continued to ask futile questions about the colour, age and other characteristics of the cow. Because of this stubborn attitude, Allah (SWT) made their task harder, forcing them to find a very rare and expensive cow. [6]

JUDAISM AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Because the Qur'an sometimes speaks harshly to the Jewish people at the time of the Prophet, some people accuse the Qur'an of being anti-Semitic (against Jews). However, the message of the Qur'an is that the people of the Book - including Jews - are respected if they follow their Holy Book properly.

In particular, the Qur'an, when speaking about the people of the Book,

- does not generalise: it says there are some great people among the Christians and Jews (who stand up for truth and stay up at night praying), but also some evil people who corrupt God's religion
- does not see one nation as better than another
- gives many examples from the history of the Jewish people in order to teach Muslims, because their history is very similar to the history of Muslims

Jews are criticised the Qur'an when they ignore their faith. Even the Torah (the Jewish holy book) criticises the Jews for this. Therefore, it is always the belief and good actions which are judged.

"Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." (2:62)

JUDAISM VS. ZIONISM

It is important to distinguish between Judaism and Zionism. Judaism is a monotheistic religion while Zionism is a secular ideology. Not all Jewish people support Zionism, and not all Zionists are Jewish. Judaism is a religion which originated more than 35 centuries ago, while Zionism came about in 1897 in Switzerland.

[2] Holy Quran 7:138-139
[3] Holy Quran 2:61
[4] Holy Quran 5:20-26
[5] Holy Quran 20:86-97
[6] Holy Quran 2:67-72

السَّلامُ عَلى عيسى نَبـِـيِ اللهِ

PROPHET ʿĪSĀ [A.S]
نبي الله (ع) عيسى

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know some of the arguments that Christian evangelists make by referring to the Holy Qur'an, and how to rebut these arguments
- Discuss the fact that the Bible prophesied the coming of Prophet Muḥammad
- Understand in depth the arguments against the Christian doctrine of Trinity
- Understand in depth the arguments against the Christian doctrine of Crucifixion and salvation

Lesson 1: ʿĪsā in the Qur'an, Muḥammad in the Injīl

In past years, we have discussed the life of Prophet Jesus (as) and his mother Mary (as). We have also discussed some of the issues related to main Christian doctrines. In these lessons, we will discuss some of the arguments posed by Christian evangelists, before discussing the main Christian doctrines, and analysing them in more depth.

CHRISTIAN ARGUMENTS REFERENCING THE QUR'AN

Christian evangelists sometimes refer to Qur'anic passages to try to prove some of their theological points. This lesson will explore these arguments and rebut them.

1. God's Word Never Changes

Allegation: The Quran claims that no one can alter the word of God, so why do Muslims claim that the Bible has been altered? "[This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change." (Quran 48:23)

Response: This particular verse has been intentionally quoted out of context, for known reasons. As soon as we read it in its context we can clearly see the meaning behind it. Allah is promising the "Allies of Allah" good news in this life and paradise in the Hereafter and his words or 'Promises' will never change. It doesn't mean that Allah is promising that no one will be able to change the words of the previous Holy Books (Taurāh, & Injīl).

The "words of Allah" as it is used in the Quran, does not refer to the previous holy books every time.

The expression the "words of Allah" has a number of meanings in the Qur'an, including:

- Promise
- Command
- Act of God, especially the act of Creation
- Signs of God

Below are some examples of different usages of this expression:

"When Abraham was tried by his Lord with words (commands) and he fulfilled them…" (2:124)

"Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance…" (2:37)

2. The Quran as a Guardian

Allegation: The Qur'an not only claims to confirm the previous scriptures but also claims the responsibility of being "a guardian" over them.

"And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it" (5:48)

Muslim interpreters of the Qur'an say that "a guardian over it" means "The Qur'an is the protector of all the sacred books to preserve them from any kind of change".

In the Qur'an there is no suggestion of alteration or corruption of the Biblical text by use of the word "taḥrīf". The word "taḥrīf" is used to accuse the Jews (but not Christians) of concealing the truth, but it in no way implies that the text had been corrupted.

How can the Taurāh and the Injīl be distorted, and yet the Qur'an remains a guardian over them? If this is the case, then the Qur'an itself is also open to the accusation of corruption and can be charged with failing in its role as a guardian.

Response: The Qur'an states that it is a guardian over the previous scriptures, for the following reasons:

- The Qur'an has not been altered by humans, as God has promised to preserve his words for the future generations. In saying that, the previous holy books which were revealed to prophets Moses and Jesus (as) were lost or destroyed. Then, people started re-writing them in their own styles, according to their understating and to suit their desires.
- God didn't promise to preserve the previous holy books, even though that they are both his words "originally", because they were meant to be temporary. They were sent for a particular era. God has only promised to guard his Final Testament for ever to make sure every one hears His words, so that no one will be excused on Judgment Day. The Qur'an is an everlasting miracle, not dependent on any period of time or the presence of any particular person.

3. Jesus is introduced as a 'soul from God'

Allegation: The Qur'an describes Jesus as the soul of God' in the following passage. Does this not indicate the divinity of Jesus?

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۘ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا {171}

"O people of the Scripture, Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth. The Messiah Īsā (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (Rūḥ) from Him; so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not: "Three (trinity)!" Cease! (it is) better for you. For Allah is (the only) One God, Glory be to Him (Far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is All-Sufficient as a Disposer of affairs."

Response: the description of Jesus as a 'soul from Him' in the above āyah refers to the fact that Jesus (as) was created by God. God created the soul of Jesus (as) just liked he created the soul of any other living being. Therefore, it is correct and natural to refer to any living creature as a 'soul from God'. Why is this specifically mentioned in the Qur'an in relation to Jesus (as) and not others? The reason is that Jesus (as) was born in a miraculous manner, and is a more obvious signs of God's power of creation. This āyah has no reference to the

divinity of Jesus and this expression of 'soul from God' is not indicating divinity to Jesus in any way. The remaining parts of this passage, which clearly denounce Trinity and the claims of Christians make this obvious.

4. Jesus is introduced as the 'Word of God'

Allegation: in the above passage (4:171), the Qur'an introduces Jesus as the Word of God- this is line with the Biblical teachings about Jesus being the Word of God (logos), and this is an indication of the divinity of Jesus, because the Word of God must exist with God always, and thus the Word of God (here claimed to be Jesus) must be co-eternal with God.

Response: the use of the expression 'His Word' in this āyah does not indicate the divinity of Jesus. As explained earlier, the expression 'word' when related to God can have a number of different meanings. The meaning indicated here is that Jesus was a creation of God, and the creations of God are said to be His 'words' in the Holy Qur'an. This is confirmed by another Qur'anic ayah in which God says:

"Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" and it is!" (36:82)

So the āyah quoted above is merely confirming the status of Jesus as a creature of God. The reason for the special mention for Jesus (as) again is that he was born miraculously, and because there were false claims about his being divine. Thus the Qur'an was to confirm Jesus as a creature of God through the use of this expression, while at the same time giving him the honour he deserves as a great Messenger of Allah.

JESUS (AS) PROPHESIED THE COMING OF MUHĀMMAD (SAW)

Now that we have refuted some of the common arguments Christian evangelists make by referring to the Qur'an, it is important to refer to the Bible in order to see how it confirms the Prophethood of Muḥammad (saw).

The Bible tells us that Jesus promised to send another prophet, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

That comforter has been described as the spirit of truth in the same book of John. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you." (John 16:12-14)

Notice the pronouns used in the verse (He/His). Ten masculine pronouns are used in one verse; no other verse in the Bible has so many masculine pronouns. This tells us that the 'Spirit of Truth' or the 'Comforter' is a human male, and not a ghost. This is certainly a unique verse for a unique personality, which is that of Muḥammad (saw).

The term used here is **Comforter**. This is an English translation of the Greek word "Periklyots" used in the ancient manuscripts. It is amazing that this word really means: "the praiseworthy". As you know, this is the meaning of the name Aḥmad or Muḥammad. Similarly, **the Spirit of Truth**. Is referring to the characteristics of Prophet Muḥammad, who was known as the Trustworthy and Truthful even before his mission began.

The distortion that has occurred in the Bible has made this point difficult to prove. However, if we analyse further, we can see that it is pointing to no one else other than Muḥammad (saw). We can make the following points in relation to this:

- John uses the words 'prophet' and 'spirit' synonymously in the following passage, further supporting the claim that the 'spirit of truth' we saw in (John 16:12-14) is referring to a prophet: "Dear friends, do not believe every **spirit**, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are **from God**, because many false **prophets** have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1).

In another part, John declares that the spirit should be tested, if it declares Jesus as the "Messiah" or "Christ" then it is a spirit from God. The word "Messiah" literally means the one who is anointed, as this was the traditional one of indicating a holy position for someone in the past. The Greek equivalent for this term is "Christos", and Christ is derived from this. The Arabic equivalent for all these terms is 'al-Masīḥ'. Now, Prophet Muḥammad clearly introduces Jesus as the Messiah through the Holy Qur'an, and therefore he passes the test and must be the Spirit of Truth who we are seeking:

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ{45}

"(Remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name will be al-Masīh (the Messiah), Jesus the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and in the

Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allah."

Furthermore, Jesus made it a condition that he has to go, in order for that 'spirit of Truth' or comforter to come. Jesus has been quoted to have said the following: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, **the Helper** will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." (John 16:7).

According to the bible, the Holy Ghost was there all the time helping Jesus to establish his ministry, and assisting his disciples to preach and heal. Thus the above description cannot apply to the Holy Ghost, because it was already there with Jesus.

This leaves us with clear evidence that Jesus (as) was referring to Prophet Muḥammad and prophesying his advent as the last Messenger of God.

Review Questions

Do some research into the Qur'anic use of the expression 'word of God'. How many different meanings for this can you find? What is the significance of each meaning? Which of these applies to the use of this term in relation to Jesus (as)?

Lesson 2: Trinity

The doctrine of Trinity is the central doctrine in Christian theology. It is the belief in a Triune Godhead, that God is 'three in one'. The trinity consists of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It also includes the belief that God became incarnate in Jesus and that Jesus (the Son) is of the same substance as the Father.

Historical development of the doctrine and how it was influenced by external sources

The doctrine of Trinity cannot be understood completely without an appreciation of the historical development of the doctrine of Trinity. Firstly, we must note it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible itself. In the period immediately following the life of Jesus Christ on earth, there were many questions about his identity, his status and the claim of incarnation. The more the Church claimed that Jesus was God incarnate, the more need there was to explain the relationship of Jesus Christ to God. The roots of the doctrine of Trinity lie here.

It took until the middle of the fourth century for there to be any sort of consensus on this issue. Tertullian introduced the terminology of Trinity in the last second or early third century, but it was after this that the Arian controversy came about, forcing the Church to formalise its belief about the significance of Jesus. Arius (c.250-c.336) was a priest in one of the major churches in Alexandria. He taught that the Father and the Son do not have the same essence, that the Son is a created being, and that there was a time when the Son did not exist. Thus Arius taught that Jesus was 'the first among creatures', but not divine in any meaningful way.

Athanasius (c. 297-c. 373) was another Alexandrian priest who strongly opposed Arius' teachings, and claimed Jesus to be divine. This controversy divided the Church, and it had to be settled. The Emperor Constantine the Great convened a council of bishops in order to come to an answer to settle this controversy, an answer which would then become official Church doctrine. The Council voted in favour of the view of Athanasius, and the doctrine that the Son and the Father were of the same substance became official Church teaching

It is important to note that most bishops were not in agreement with either Athanasius or Arius. However, Athanasius managed to exert his influence over many of the delegates, and so all but two signed his Creed. Arius, and two others, refused to do, and were later excommunicated.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF THAT CONTRADICTS THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

There are a number of Biblical passages that clearly contradict the doctrine of Trinity. Some of them are listed below:

- These passages indicate God cannot be seen or heard, so can Jesus (who was seen and heard) be God?

  "And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen," (John 5:37).

  "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18)

  In his letter to the Colossians, Paul says: "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." (Colossians 1:15-21)

- Jesus is related to have prayed in the following passage, if he is God, then to whom does he pray?

  "And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray." (Matthew 14:23)

- Here, Jesus is described clearly as a prophet, not as the son of God;

  When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:10-11)

  "…… Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honoured everywhere except in his own hometown…" (Matthew 13:57)

  "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people." (Luke 24:19)

  "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

- Here, he is described as someone needing God's approval and being dependent on God:

  "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him." (Acts 2:22)

  "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38)

- The following passages clearly indicate there is only One God, which is the main point we want to prove:

  "You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:35)

  "I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you," (Isaiah 45:5)

  When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment of all, he quoted this verse: "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

We can see from the above passages that the Bible in many places indicates that God is one. However, Christians argue that God is one but in a plurality. They argue that the word "one" or in Hebrew (*Ehad*) is not one alone but one as a compound unity. And they will quote this passage: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) or (Ephesians 5:31). Yet in fact, the word "Ehad" in Hebrew could mean one as alone and one as a compound unity, depending on its context. For example: "one person who has no other, either son or brother" (Ecclesiastes 4:8)

Christians may also quote this passage in the first book of the bible, and say this shows that god is more than one. "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness…" (Genesis 1:26). However, that is the 'magestic we', used to indicate status and respect, not an actual plurality.

If we look in the Bible, we can see other verses that clearly used the word one or 'Ehad' to indicate a singular one, not a compound unity. Some examples follow:

- "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him." (Isaiah 51:2)
- "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me" (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- The first commandment that Moses taught the Israelites says: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:2-3).

Christians may also refer to the following passage to try to prove the divinity of Jesus: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

This may seem to indicate some sort of unity between God and Jesus, but when we look at the quote in context, we see that it is not claiming divinity for Jesus: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. **I and the Father are one**."

The passage is indicating that the Father and Jesus are one in seeing that if the person accepts faith, they shall remain in faith. It is referring to a *unity of purpose*, not a unity of substance. It is this same unity of purpose which is referred to in the following passage: "…Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:11)

Jesus here is using the same word "one" for himself and for his disciples. Does that mean that his disciples are one in substance with him and with God? Of course not! He means his disciples should unify in one and same purpose.

So we can see that there is very little evidence within the Bible for the belief in Trinity, and in fact there is plenty of evidence for a belief in a true Unity of God.

TRINITY CONTRADICTS LOGIC

If we read the first passage of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1), we see it contains a clear logical contradiction. How can the Word be 'with God' (i.e. separate to God) and yet be God at the same time? In fact, this particular quote, was plagiarised by the writer of "The Gospel According to John", who borrowed it from a Greek philosopher named Philo.

If we read verse 14 from the same chapter it says: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14), we can clearly see that this verse implies that god has changed from the unlimited spiritual nature into humanly flesh nature. This fact of God changing his nature is rejected by God, in his own words according to the Bible itself: "I am the LORD, and I do not change." (Malachi 3:6). If God can change, it means he can be updated, or created into a different form or new shape that he wasn't like before, which implies that he needs that form or space to exist, and God cannot be dependent on anything. This shows that God the Son is not co-equal to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, as he had to undergo change, and they (the Father and presumably the Holy Spirit) did not.

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

Christians typically ask, If God is omnipotent, (All Powerful) shouldn't he be able to take on a human form and dwell among humans and behave like humans? If not, how can such a being be called all-powerful?

From a logical point of view, the question itself is illogical and an example of fallacy. It is similar to the question: "Can God create a rock so heavy that He can't lift it Himself". The problem is it contains a self-contradiction, mainly, that God is all-powerful and not-all-powerful at the same time. The question works grammatically but not intellectually.

When we say God is omnipotent, we mean He has power over all things which have an intellectual existence. However, possibilities like the above do not have a real intellectual existence, we cannot even imagine them! Therefore, they fall into the realm of non-existence and thus have nothing to do with God's Omnipotence.

A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANS

We found nowhere in the bible where Jesus says: "I am God" or where Jesus says: "Worship Me". Can Christians present real evidence from their own book that Jesus is divine or should be worshipped?

The most a Christian may claim is by referring to the following passage: "For there are three that bear record

in heaven, the Father, the Word [Jesus], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (I John 5: 7) KJV.

Note that this verse is only found in the King James Version. Almost all modern versions of the bibles do not include that particular verse anymore! It was removed and declared a fabrication. Even though this verse played such an important role in the faith and the prayers of Christians, it is no longer considered part of the Bible. Instead, the following versions of the verse are now found in different versions of the Bible:

- "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement." (I John 5: 7) NIV.
- "For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (I John 5: 7) ESV.

CONCLUSION

In this lesson, we have analysed the doctrine of Trinity. We have come to a number of conclusions:

- 'Trinity' is not mentioned in the Bible itself. It developed over four centuries after the ascension of Jesus (as)
- Trinity is illogical
- There is no sound evidence for the doctrine of Trinity in the Bible
- There is plenty of evidence contradicting the doctrine of Trinity within the Bible

Review Questions

Research some of the 'models' for visualising the Trinity presented by Christian theologians over time (e.g. the example of triangle having three sides but being one triangle). What is the problem with all of these models?

Lesson 3: Crucifixion

Another of the main Christian doctrines is that of Crucifixion and salvation. Christians believe that Jesus was captured by the Jews of his time, nailed to the cross and tortured, until he died. They believe he was resurrected three days later and came back to Earth as a final miracle.

The claimed event of crucifixion is central to Christian theology. They believe that all humans are born sinful, because of the 'original sin' of Adam. They believe the only way for our sins to be expiated is for god himself to suffer for them, and they see the crucifixion of Jesus as god suffering in for us to be freed from sin and achieve salvation. We read in Paul's First letter to the Corinthians, "And if Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also in vain. More than that, and we are then found to be false witnesses of God ..." (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IS ILLOGICAL

The doctrine of salvation as presented in Christianity is illogical. It is against God's justice that all humans should suffer and be born with an inclination towards sin, simply because one human, Adam, made a mistake. The justice of god rejects the idea that he can punish innocent people for the sins of the others, as we can see it clearly in the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament. "The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them." (Ezekiel 18:20). We also see this reference to the justice of God in the following passage: "I the Lord search the heart, and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." (Jeremiah 17:10).

The Holy Qur'an further confirms this idea:

> "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (35:18)

So we see that this doctrine goes against justice, and this ethical argument is supported by Biblical evidence.

BIBLICAL PASSAGES CONTRADICTING THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

We also find numerous passages in the Bible that contradict that dogma of the inheritance of the Original Sin, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

- Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist (Prophet Yaḥyā) as we are told in (Matthew 3:13-17). This would imply that that Jesus was regarded as a sinner, who has inherited the original sin. How can he then be the vehicle for salvation?
- The following passage indicates that God does not want sacrifice in exchange for atonement of sins. Yet Christians claim that the sacrifice of Jesus was necessary for the atonement of sin.
  "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6)
- If we read (Luke 23:26-34) we can clearly see that the person who was crucified could actually be Simon of Cyrene, and certainly not Jesus.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE BIBLICAL NARRATIONS OF THE STORY

The story of crucifixion has many discrepancies and contradictions, if we compare the accounts across the Four Gospels.

- What day did Jesus die? That is a very simple question! We are told in both Mark and John. In Mark, we are told that it is the day after the Passover meal was eaten in Jerusalem. (Mark 14:12-16). And In John, we are told that it is the day before the Passover meal was eaten, on the day of preparation for the Passover. (John 19:14). And many more. Conclusion: these accounts are full of discrepancies and they are not reliable.
- What were Jesus' last words? Mark and Matthew state they were: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" John states that they were: "It is finished", while Luke states they were: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

There are many other contradictions within the Biblical narrations of this story, indicating that this story may not have a true origin.

BIBLICAL VERSES THAT REJECT THE CRUCIFIXION

Here, we would like to explore one important point in greater detail: did the historical event claimed by Christians- that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, was crucified by the soldiers of Pontius Pilate- really occur? The intention of this argument is not to prove that *a* crucifixion did not take place but rather that it was not Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. The early Christians had doubt about this. The Holy Qur'an rejects that Jesus was ever crucified and killed. This rejection is very much justified, because of the reasons below:

• We have no first-hand accounts of the event. The only sources we have are the accounts of Josephus, a Jewish historian, and Tacitus, a Roman historian, both of whom were not present at the time of the crucifixion.

• The Jewish Talmud tells us that Jesus was stoned to death. This contradicts the Biblical account (of course neither account is true)

• Early Christian sources: there are significant early sources that all suggests that were Christian groups that did not believe in the crucifixion and rejected that concept, or at least questions how the crucifixion took place:

- **The Writings of the Early Church Fathers.** Such as have Ignasous , Polycarp, Justin, Uranaiuos, Tulian and Hepolaias. These fathers were attacking the groups who did believe in Crucifixion, indicating there were such groups. Perhaps most known among them was a group in Egypt called the Missillidions, who believed it was a person by the name of Simon of Cyrene who was in fact crucified.
- **The New Testament Apocryphal Books.** Such as books of Jeeuo which go back to the third century in Egypt, says that Jesus was not crucified. The Apocrypha of Peter and the Acts of John are early books that were canonised but which state that Jesus was not crucified.
- **The New Testament itself.** When Jesus was arrested and brought back to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, we are told in Matthew that Pilate really did not want to do anything to Jesus. He asked the crowd to choose between freeing Jesus or freeing another prisoner, and that he would allow this as a gesture of mercy: "so when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, **Jesus Barabbas** or Jesus, who is called the Messiah" (Matthew: 27:16, NIV). The people chose Barabbas and then Jesus was crucified. However in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible said that the two persons were "Jesus the Barabbas" and the other was "Jesus the Messiah" This is further clarified in the following passage: "At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was ***Jesus Barabbas***." (Matthew 27:16) NIV.

So who was set free? Jesus of Nazareth or another man named Jesus?

It seems that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was set free. This is because the name "Barabbas" literally means 'son of the Father'. Of course, this would be referring to Jesus of Nazareth, and so if it is Barabbas who was set free, then it is Jesus of Nazareth who was set free, and another man, also named Jesus, who was instead crucified.

This may explain why the Coptic Christian Church canonized Pilate as a saint! Do you justify sainthood for the man who killed Jesus? Or for the man who saved him and set him free?

There is another issue to consider here. There is a variant in several Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew. The traditional text of Matthew 27:16-17 reads as follows in the New American Standard Bible (NASB): “At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" Several manuscripts, however, name the criminal "Jesus Barabbas" and have Pilate ask:

“Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah? “(v. 17). Many textual scholars believe the double name "Jesus Barabbas" was the original reading. They suggest that "Jesus" was omitted from several Greek manuscripts of Matthew out of reverence.

This shows us that the criminal being held along with Jesus of Nazareth was also named Jesus (Barabbas), and that he may have been the one actually crucified, but that this was later historically confused with Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.

It also seems from some account that Jesus Barabbas was claiming to the king of the Jews, and we see in many places in the Bible that the person who was crucified was in fact the person who was claiming to be the king of the Jews. Thus it is likely that the other Jesus (The Criminal), and not Jesus of Nazareth (Barabbas) or the Messiah, who was in fact crucified.

THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD

Christian theologians object to the Islamic theological belief that we need both Faith and Good Works together to be saved. The Qur’an states:

" والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات سندخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا "

“But those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow…” (4:57)

Protestant Christians believe In “justification by faith alone”, while Catholics place a little more emphasis on actions. Yet all Christians would not claim that a person who believes in Jesus is free to commit sins and crimes and yet still expect to go to heaven. So at the end of the day, they also acknowledge that both faith and good works are needed.

The other objection they have is this: how can a sin committed against God be expiated by the repentance of a human? They claim that a sin against God can only be expiated by the action of God. The simple answer is that it God’s will that faith and certain acts of repentance cancel out certain sins committed against God. Just as Christians claim (without basis) that Jesus’ death was willed by God to a vehicle for salvation, why can it not be God’s will that certain good works atone for certain sins? Surely, this is more just than believing that the sacrifice and pain of one person wipes away the sins of other, independent people.

Review Questions

Research the Qur’anic concept of justice and mercy of God. How can we reconcile these two concepts?

السَّلامُ عَلى سُلَيْمان نبي الله (ع)

PROPHET SULAYMĀN[A.S]

نبي الله سُلَيْمانَ (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Be introduced to Prophet Sulaymān as a sinless Prophet of Allah (SWT)**
- **Discuss the scope of the kingdom of Prophet Sulaymān (as)**
- **Discuss the issue of Islamic governance in relation to Prophet Sulaymān**
- **Understand that Allah (SWT) gives great power to His Trustees who submit to Him.**

Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is a Prophet of Allah (SWT) and was the son of Prophet Dawūd (David). Being a Prophet, he was ma'sūm, or sinless. He is one of the Prophet who is mentioned several times in the Holy Qur'an.

SOLOMON (AS) IN THE BIBLE

Prophet Sulaymān (as) is also one of the personalities mentioned in the current Bible. Unfortunately, the Bible describes him as a king, who had hundreds of wives, and did many terrible things to become king. It paints a very disrespectful picture of this great prophet.

Unfortunately, some of these stories have penetrated Muslim hadith texts[i]. We have to be especially careful of such traditions that go against the Holy Qur'an and the basic principles of Islam.

PROPHET SULAYMĀN IN THE QUR'AN

In the Holy Quran, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is introduced as one of the greatest Prophets, a wise king and a servant of Allah (SWT). He was granted wisdom as well as some special miracles. Some of his miracles include:

- having control over natural phenomena like the wind,
- Being able to communicate with animals
- Having control over the Jinn

"And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had blessed. And We are ever, of all things, Knowing." (21:81)

Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted these powers and gifts He did not ask for a mighty kingdom and authority because he wanted fame, power and glory; rather, his aim was to guide his people and to establish justice in the world. At no time does history show that Prophet Sulaymān (as) ever used his powers for his own ambitions or for personal gain. In fact, he placed his great power and means at the service of his people to guide them so that the banner of belief in One God. This is the supplication of Prophet Sulaymān (as) to his Lord:

"My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as You are pleased with, and include me, by Your mercy, in the ranks of Your righteous servants." (27:19)

The Holy Quran presents Prophet Sulaymān (as) as a wise and just leader, who was appointed by Allah (SWT).The story of this prophet emphasises to us that in Islam, there is no distinction between religion and state (or government). Allah (SWT) uses the example of Prophet Sulaymān and the story of the Ants and the story of the throne of Bilqīs (that has been discussed in previous years) to show that however powerful a leader is, he

1- Must be subservient to Allah (SWT)
2- Must not use his power to supress and oppress his subjects (as in the story of the ants)
3- Must always be just and fair in his dealings with his subjects (as in the story of the people of Saba')
4- Must not be arrogant and know that it is Allah (SWT) that grants such positions.

When we look at the world around us, it is important to see whether the leaders of our world or our nation have these characteristics. If they do not, we cannot accept them as leaders.

THE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT IN ISLAM

As stated earlier, in Islam, there is no distinction or separation between religion and state. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted an absolute dominion over not only the physical subjects, but also super natural subjects (Jinn). Prophet Sulaymān (as) was not only the religious leader but also the political leader of his community, just as the Holy Prophet (saw) was at his time.

The natural order of the world is such that Allah (SWT) always grants the most perfect human being at any one time the complete dominion over *all* His creatures. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

To Memorise

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

"I am going to place in the earth a khalifah…" (2:30)

This khalifah or representative is not only chosen by Allah (SWT) but has been granted complete dominion over the entire universe including the social, economic, moral, religious and psychological aspects of human beings. Today, this representative or proof (Ḥujjah) is Imam Mahdi (as).

In recent times the debate over whether religion should interfere in the affairs of the state has erupted. **U**sually the ignorance of the principles of Islam leads some people to suggest that state and religion should not mix and should be kept separate.

In Islam, aside from historical precedents set by the likes of Prophet Dawūd (as), Prophet Sulaymān (as), our Holy Prophet (S), and Imam 'Ali (as), we can also consider the following points which demonstrate the inseparability of state and religion in Islam:

1. The Rule belongs solely to Allah (SWT)

As Muslims, we all believe that Allah, the Exalted, is our Creator, Nurturer, and Guide. He is All-Knowing of what would benefit His creation and slaves in their worldly and religious affairs.

Therefore, mankind must submit to Allah, His divine legislation and His just, wise laws in all stages of his life. Allah, the Exalted says:

"the rule is only for Allah, He declares the truth, and He is the Best Judge." (6:57).

2. Islamic Jurisprudence is the Constitution for Life, including Government

Islamic jurisprudence is not a set of individual rules of worship only. Rather, it includes the constitution for life, including Islamic government. It encompasses financial laws, civil laws (e.g. marriage and divorce) military laws, judicial laws etc…

Thus Islamic jurisprudence is the constitution of the Islamic government in its entirety.

3. Islamic Government is a Necessary Part of an Islamic Society

The endurance of Islamic jurisprudence necessarily requires there to be an Islamic government which ensures that Islamic jurisprudence is put into practice and which takes up the role of implementing it. Otherwise, the divine laws will be overlooked, as is the current situation in many countries which are 'Islamic' by name.

4. The Necessity of Appointing a Leader who will Implement Islamic Law

Because we need an Islamic government, we also need a trusted ruler who is well versed in the divine laws so he can implement them.

The Islamic Ruler must be the most knowledgeable of people about the laws of Allah and the most just amongst the Muslims. Of course, when an infallible Imam is present, he is obviously the leader.

5. It is not Permissible to Suspend Divine Laws in the Era of Occultation

However, during the ghaybah (occultation) of our Imam Mahdi (as), who will implement the laws of Islam and rule by Allah's command?

There is no doubt that the laws of Islam continue till Resurrection Day, they are not somehow 'put on hold' until Imam Mahdi (as) reappears. Otherwise, it would mean that the greater period of time was excluded from these laws. It would also lead to the spread of sins and corruption during the ghaybah, and this is definitely something that Allah (SWT) does not want.

Thus, during the ghaybah, when we do not have an infallible ruler, we have two choices. Either we:

1. Ignore Governance: but this will be ignoring something important (Islamic Government) which people need in order to organize their worldly life and Hereafter

2. **We say that the Allah (SWT) left it to the community** to run their own affairs as they see fit, according to democracy, dictatorship or any other doctrine that is popular at the time.

Both options are obviously invalid, because an important need of the Muslim community is ignored. Which need is greater than the need for the most knowledgeable (in the laws of God) and just person to manage the affairs of the community and maintain the order of the Muslim lands during the ghaybah, while maintaining and implementing the Islamic laws?

Therefore, the only option we have is to have an Islamic government. This government must be led by the most knowledge scholar of the time, who does his best to establish the laws of Islam in the land.

The important point to remember is that Islam and government are not separated, but go hand in hand. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn from the life of Prophet Sulaymān (as).

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Sulaymān (as) is:

a. Only mentioned in the Qur'an

b. Is only considered sinless in the Qur'an

c. Is not mentioned in the Bible

Q2. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was:

a. A Prophet only

b. A King only

c. A prophet and a King

[i] See Story of Sulayman in Hayat Qulub (Allamah Majlisi) http://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol1-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/23.htm

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Pilot Curriculum 2020-2021
Grade 11 Stream 2

Preface and Introduction by Moulana Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)
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بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيم

نٓ ۚ وَٱلْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

Nūn! [I swear] by the pen and what they inscribe! (68:1)

Salāmun ʿalaykum,

All praise is for Allah, Lord and Nurturer of the worlds. It is an honor and pleasure to address you dear teachers, administrators, educators, and parents. This āyah of the Qurʾān demonstrates the sanctity of writing. When Allah takes an oath by those who write and that which has been written, it clearly indicates that writing and books are instrumental in shaping the future generations. If we do not fulfill our responsibilities, we will be held accountable. However, if we do a proper job, Allah guarantees us a high position.

We know that Islam places great emphasis on education as a whole. After delving further, we find that education has two formats: formal and informal. Informal education entails formats such as speeches, classes, discussions, or a teacher's interactions within the classroom. Formal education refers to the standards and guidelines that teachers follow when teaching, which is usually a curriculum.

We are honored to be a part of this noble cause of developing and compiling a K-12 curriculum for Islamic Studies and Qurʾān, as well as for life skills and contemporary issues related to our daily lives. As we know, Islam is a complete way of life. Allah says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِى وَنُسُكِى وَمَحْيَاىَ وَمَمَاتِى لِلَّـهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ

Say, "Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the worlds." (6:162)

From this āyah, we deduce that Islam encompasses all areas of our lives. However, based on our limitations and circumstances this is difficult to implement in all areas of education. Full-time schools generally only allocate a few hours a week for Islamic studies. Similarly, weekend schools also only operate for a few hours once a week, over 30-34 weeks of the year.

Overall, Sunday schools and full-time Islamic schools do not yet have the capacity to adopt a system of complete integration for our children to learn Islam in conjunction with other subjects. Therefore, most schools focus on these five subjects: Qurʾān, ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, and akhlāq.

Alḥamdulillāh, Kisa Kids is pleased to present the pilot version of our Islamic Studies curriculum. The current pilot focuses on the four core subjects: ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, and akhlāq. Inshāʾ Allāh, we hope to further develop the fifth core subject, Qurʾān, in areas such as recitation, tajwīd, mafāhīm (understanding), and tafsīr and deeper understanding.

In Islamic Studies, we've had some great milestones, alḥamdulillāh. The Pre-K-6th curriculum has undergone many iterations and reached a good point. Although we had a pilot for 7th grade, based on input from different individuals, we have transferred some of the topics from 7th grade into 8th grade and added additional lessons.

The 9th-12th grade curriculum is also a compilation of different resources. Although we had created a scope and sequence and planned to develop the lessons ourselves, we ran into some unforeseen hurdles with the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this pandemic, we expedited the launch of RISE Online, a full-time online Islamic school, and Salam Online, an online weekend Islamic school platform that caters to over 250 teachers, principals, and educators across the globe, in collaboration with more than 20 schools during this pandemic era.

We have found that there is an urgent need for online resources during this time; therefore, our team of scholars, educators, and volunteers, including the Kisa Kids curriculum team and Islamic Syllabus team from Australia have created a pilot using different curricula given to us for use. Therefore, we have taken lessons from different sources: Islamic Syllabus, Kisa Kids curriculum, Madressa.net, Sirat, QFatima, and Shaykh Salim Yusufali's work, and compiled them into one pilot, by the will of Allah.

Alḥamdulillāh, with the barakah of this collaboration, we have launched this as Phase 1 of the 7-12 curriculum plan. This will be the pilot for this year, and inshāʾ Allāh, over the course of this year, we will conduct surveys and focus groups to gauge what is working and what is not working.

Based on input from educators, parents, students, and teachers we will strive to improve the curriculum for next year, inshāʾ Allāh. We humbly request all the users, principals, scholars, and students to consider the following points:

- The K-12 curriculum will have lots of errors and mistakes, as well as some ambiguities. We humbly request that you give us your input so we may make improvements, and forgive us for any shortcomings.
- Although the books entail the four core subjects, they may not have the best flow, as the material has been compiled from different curricula, so there may be some repetition in some areas and lack of information in others. Again, we humbly request your input.
- This curriculum is a pilot, not the final edition. We will accommodate suggestions to launch a final one at a later time.
- If anyone has any lesson plans, teaching methodologies, supplemental curriculum, or any additional resources, please share them with us so we can consider incorporating them into the curriculum.

- If someone is working on digital resources, such as presentations, quizzes, games, etc., please share with us via this form so we can disseminate these widely, and others may benefit as well.
- As we are moving toward digitalization, which will require a strong learning management system, we are open to feedback. We value your collaboration so we can avoid duplication, optimize our potential, and see great results, inshāʾAllāh. At the end of the day, our goal is to nurture and plant the seed of love of Qurʾān, Islam, and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) in the hearts and minds of our children in order to shape their future and attain the best in this world and the Hereafter.

For all questions, concerns, suggestions, and feedback, please contact admin@kisakids.org or admin@salamonline.education.

With Duʿās,

Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 1-4

Social Islam

1. Self-Reliance
2. Minding the Tongue
3. Arguing
4. Backbiting

Social Independence

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Understand that Islam encourages us to be independent in our personal and social needs, where possible**
- **Discuss some examples of independence in personal and social needs**
- **Understand that a person who is independent and does not ask from others is liked by people, and a person who asks a lot is often not liked**
- **Understand that when it comes to Allah (SWT), we should ask Him for all our needs, big or small and that we get rewarded for just asking Him**
- **Understand that where it is necessary to seek help, we should do so**
- **Understand that when it comes to helping others, we should not wait to be asked**

Self-Reliance and Independence

... وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"... And consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him." (3: 159)

The reality that self-reliance and independence in relation to our own needs is well established as a source of positive pride, success and maturity. This sort of self-reliance is highly encouraged in Islam and is actually a sign of having greater trust and hope in Allah (SWT) – such that a self-reliant person is closer in his relationship to Allah (SWT) than a person who depends on others despite having the ability to secure his own needs.

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN RELIANCE ON ALLAH (SWT) AND SELF-RELIANCE

There are several examples of how the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) have shown that self-reliance is not in contradiction to reliance on Allah (SWT) – if it is practiced within its limits. Have a look at this story.

Imam 'Ali (as) was once walking along the streets going about his own work and he happened to come across a group of people who did not seem to be engaged in work. Imam 'Ali (as) enquired further with them.

They responded: 'we are religious and we rely on Allah (SWT) for our sustenance. If it comes to us, we accept and are grateful. If it doesn't come to us, we bear hunger and

hardship patiently'. Upon hearing this Imam 'Ali (as) responded 'such is the nature of a dog. It eats when it finds food and remains hungry when it does not find anything to eat.' He then told them that he was the kind of person who is grateful when he has nothing, and gives away what he has when he does have it. A further point that can be taken from the Imam's advice is that we should not be idle and passive. We must be active and independent, but keep our trust in Allah.

Therefore, we must use the opportunities, blessings and will power that Allah (SWT) has given us to help ourselves improve both in this world and in the next world.

Imam 'Ali (as) warns us that:

"One who fails to make effort due to negligence or laziness will find his state to be one of deterioration and decline."

EXAMPLES OF SELF-RELIANCE

When considering needs, it is important to understand where and upon whom the responsibility lies to secure those needs. Of course because we are talking about our individual personal and social needs, it is obvious that the responsibility lies on that individual.

Examples of such needs include something as simple as getting a glass of water or the remote control of the TV that is lying on the coffee table to as complex and sophisticated as finding a job, working and earning a living to pay your bills and fulfil your other needs.

As students, you are at stage where your major responsibility is to get through school and complete your education. As such, all responsibilities within that lie with you. Therefore, you cannot give your homework to a friend to do or pay someone over the internet to write your assignment. These are things you must do yourself and you must apply your personal effort to achieve them.

Social needs are again as simple as asking someone to get something that you can get yourself. Many situations at home involve such situations where we tend to ask someone else to do something for us though we can do it ourselves, like asking your mum to make you a snack while you're sitting on the computer or Play Station.

As you grow older, another example would be driving. Some people are older and have families but they have not learnt to move around or drive. They expect someone to take them out all the time even if it is to do their own work. This creates a lot of inconvenience on the other person who has to stop doing what they are doing so they can do what you need.

DISADVANTAGES OF RELYING ON OTHER PEOPLE ALL THE TIME

In previous lessons we have learnt the advantages of self-reliance which include a greater sense of responsibility and maturity, as well as more independence.

Let us look at the opposite of these and consider the effects of too much reliance on others:

1. Ruins your reputation – people consider you incompetent and tend to stay away from you because you are always asking them to do your things for you.
2. Makes your life difficult – this happens regularly because you have limited your ability but have not limited your desires. Therefore, when people you rely on cannot help you and you cannot help yourself, you end up living a life of misery.
3. Causes inconvenience to people who you depend on – this is usually the case, because the people you depend on have their own needs to fulfil. If they have to stop or go out of their way to get what you need, it creates disturbance and therefore also leads to them avoiding you.
4. Makes you lazy and limits your intelligence and your skills. If you do not attempt things yourself, you will not learn and your skills and knowledge will remain limited.

DOES THIS MEAN WE SHOULD NEVER SEEK HELP?

Certainly not…Self-relance also has extremes; if we are constantly seeking help from others this is disliked as it means we become dependent. At the same time if we are over-confident and never seek help we become arrogant and might make big mistakes! We have to ensure to keep to the middle ground.

THE LIMITS OF SELF-RELIANCE

As we mentioned above, self-reliance does not oppose reliance on Allah (SWT). Therefore it is important to understand that asking Allah (SWT) is in fact an act of self-reliance and it means that we are depending on Allah (SWT) only to give us strength and *tawfiq* (success) in securing our needs. It has been narrated in several *hadith* that God loves it when his servant asks Him for his need, even though it may be as small as the strap for his slipper. Other *hadith* have shown that simply asking Allah (SWT) for a need results in reward – even if the need is not immediately fulfilled. The reward is just for the act of asking Allah (SWT)!

However, when we do not have the ability or knowledge to secure a certain need, we must not remain stubborn and become arrogant by not asking someone who can help us. For example, if you are struggling in a particular subject at school, it is necessary to approach a friend or a teacher who can assist us.

The important thing to remember is that we must perform our part of the responsibility independently in as much as we can. Considering the example above, if a teachers decides to put in some extra personal time to help the student improve in that subject and gives them extra lessons, the student must put in appropriate effort and attempt those lessons with extra effort..

HELPING OTHERS

Self-reliance creates in us the responsibility to help others who cannot help themselves. In the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) has mentioned several times to give *zakat*, to be charitable, to donate etc. The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) have also encouraged and practiced this very often.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ...

"And maintain the prayer and give the *zakat*…(2:110)

There is an important note here to understand when it comes to the manner of giving or donating. The wording of 'give' in the Qur'an is used in such a sense that it means **'to give without being asked'** or to **'take the donation or money'** towards the recipient rather than the recipient coming to you.

This was displayed in the lives of all the Prophets and Imams (as). The common examples are those of Imam 'Ali (as) and Imam al-Sajjād (as) who used to go out in the night with sacks of food, money and other needs to distribute to the homeless, the sick and the poor. They would distribute in such a way, that they would not wake the recipient if they were sleeping or they would not even knock on the door.

Individual Challenge

For the next week keep a record of how many times you have asked someone to do something for you, even though you could have done it yourself. Examples could include: asking someone to fix you're a computer bug when you could have tried yourself, or asking someone to help you with a maths problem when you could have tried harder yourself, and so on...

Minding the Tongue

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Understand that the tongue is a blessing that can take us to paradise or hell as most good and bad actions start from speech**
- **Understand that we can use good speech to convince others of the beauty of Islam**
- **Be reminded that most sins are from speech and the damage done cannot easily be corrected or taken back**
- **Understand techniques of minding the tongue**
- **Be reminded of the basic rules of speech**

Minding the Tongue

وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً

"Speak (and do) good to people" (2:83)

Speech is one of main distinguishing characteristics of human beings. It is one of the signs and products of the human being's superior intelligence which Allah (SWT) has bestowed on us from His favours.

Imam 'Ali (as) has said

"Your tongue is the interpreter of your intellect."

Knowing that speech is one of the greatest blessings of human beings, it is important to understand as thoroughly as possible the ways to use this blessing in order to achieve the maximum benefit and realize its full potential for raising our status in this world and the hereafter.

SPEECH – THE SOURCE OF MAN'S SUCCESS OR DESTRUCTION

Humans are social creatures who cannot live in isolation. They naturally incline towards living together and communicating with one another. The main form of communication between humans in their social life is speech. It is this ability to speak which sets humans apart from other creatures. While most other abilities that a human possesses can also be found in other creatures, speech is something unique to mankind.

One of the major challenges of living in a society and communicating with others is in fact is how we use our tongue. Our words can be very hurtful if they are not well considered, and words which are not considered properly, can cause many problems. Therefore, in order to live well in society, we need to mind our tongue.

Imam 'Ali (as) was asked: 'What is the best thing that Allah has created?' He (as) said, 'Speech'. Then he was asked, 'What is the worst thing Allah has created?'. He (as) replied, 'Speech'. Then he said, 'With speech faces are whitened (illuminated) and with speech faces are blackened'.

By this statement, Imam 'Ali (as) has shown us that the tongue is responsible for leading man to paradise or hell depending on how he uses this blessing.

On a closer look, we will note that a majority of the sins committed start or are caused by the wrongful use of the tongue (wrong speech). These sins have damaging effects both to the individual and to the society. This is because the tongue is used to express thoughts and feelings which result in action. For example, a man who gets angry can utter vulgar words or disrespect his family members and hurt their feelings, causing a rift in the relationship.

Some of the great sins that are caused by the tongue (through speech) are the following:

a) Backbiting

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) said: "Cursed is the one who backbites against one's brother (fellow Muslim)."[i]

b) Slander

The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "Slander acts quicker against the faith of a Muslim believer than leprosy does against his body."[ii]

c) Lying

Imam al-'Askari, the eleventh Imam, (as) said: "Wickedness was put inside a house, and the key (of its door) was rendered to be lies." [iii]

d) Vain Talk

Imam 'Ali (as) said: 'Any talk that does not have the remembrance e of Allah (SWT) therein is vain'.[iv]

e) Obscene Language

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said: 'Allah (SWT) has prohibited Heaven to those who use obscenity, vulgarity, lack shame, and are not concerned about what they say and what is said to them'.[v]

f) Insulting

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said, 'The one who insults a believer is as one who is on the verge of ruin' [vi]

Note: Here it is important to understand the emphasis on the respect we should show towards our parents in particular. We should avoid rebuking, insulting or being rude and hurting their feelings in any way whatsoever.

THE BLESSING OF THE TONGUE

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) mentions that He has given us eyes and a tongue and lips, and showed us two paths, and left it up to us to choose whether we use these blessings in the right way or the wrong way:

"Have We not given him two eyes, And a tongue and two lips, And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?" (90: 8-10)

When considering the tongue, we obviously acknowledge that the physical tongue is a blessing which allows us to speak, eat, taste etc…However, here we are discussing the ability of speech. The ability of speech is what sets humans apart from animals. Historically, humans have been defined in philosophy as: 'speaking animals'. In fact,

Imam 'Ali (as): says: 'what is man without a tongue except either a drawn image or a mute animal'.

A MAN IS CONCEALED UNDER HIS TONGUE

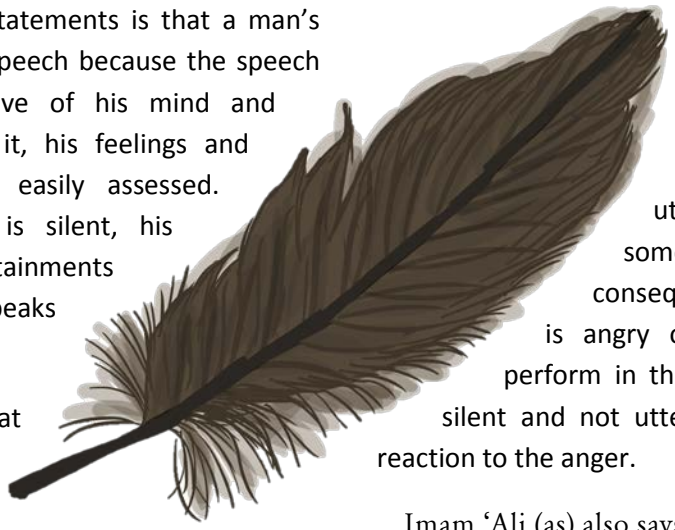
It is a person's speech which introduces that person and gives us the best insight into what kind of person he or she is. We know little about a person until we listen to them speak. Once they speak, we then either see the ugliness or the beauty of their personality through their speech. This is why Imam 'Ali (as) has said:

"The tongue is a human's scale"

Imam 'Ali (as) also says:

"Man is concealed under his tongue."

The meaning behind these statements is that a man's worth can be known by his speech because the speech of every person is indicative of his mind and manners, and by virtue of it, his feelings and temperament can be very easily assessed. Therefore, so long as he is silent, his weaknesses as well as his attainments are concealed but when he speaks his real self, manifests itself.



Some of the great virtues that man is greatly rewarded for are also caused by the tongue (through speech) are the following:

a. **Truthfulness:**

Imam AL-Ṣādiq (as) has said: 'He whose tongue tells the truth is pure of action'

b. **Eloquence:**

Imam 'Ali (as) has said, 'The best speech is that which is decorated by a pleasant structure and is understood by the elite as well as the laymen'. [vii]

c. **Supplication**

Imam 'Ali (as) has said: 'The most beloved action on this earth with Allah – The Mighty and Exalted – is supplication'. [viii]

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) commands mankind to use good speech to invite others to Islam. He says:

"Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." (16:125)

This means that our speech should be intelligent, polite, clear and appealing to the listener.

WORD POWER

The quality of speech is such that whatever one says, he or she cannot take it back. This means that once something is said – the effect of the words has already taken place and cannot be cancelled. Just like a feather that is blown away and cannot be replaced, similarly our words cannot be taken back.

This is the reason why Islam recommends that we must carefully think and ponder upon the words we wish to utter, for once we have said something, we have to live with the consequences. As such, when a person is angry or upset, the best action to perform in this state is to remain calm and silent and not utter vulgar or obscene words in reaction to the anger.

Imam 'Ali (as) also says: 'The heart of a fool is in his mouth while the tongue of the wise man is in his heart'

MINDING OUR COMMUNICATION

Speech in this context is not only limited to uttering words using the mouth. Speech extends to all forms of communication which utilize the use of words, texts, sounds and also images to certain extents especially in the form of publication. As such, the different modes of communication that would be governed by the rules of speech in Islam include:

- Talking face to face
- Talking on the phone/video
- Texting
- Online communication including chats, email and comments etc. This includes all communication in social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Now that we know how important and also dangerous the tongue can be, we must know how to use it properly

to avoid harming ourselves (our reputation) and also others' (feelings).

Since many feelings and relationships are based on the communication of speech, it is vital to regulate who we speak to, when we speak and where and how we speak – to the four questions to ask before speaking are:

1. **Who** – are we speaking to someone we are allowed to speak to?

2. **When** – are we speaking when it is necessary to speak?

3. **What** – is what we are saying important, true, good and useful/relevant?

4. **How** – are we polite, rude, angry, or sarcastic?

SOME RULES TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN SPEAKING

1. Avoid all the plagues of tongue – this includes lies, swearing or vulgar words, sarcasm and insults, rudeness and other ill words
2. Don't be the sole speaker, also listen to the other person
3. Don't prolong your stories. The more you speak the more you slip, the more you bore people, and above all the more you harden your heart.
4. Don't say but what you know, and also don't say all what you know.
5. Try to practice silence as much as possible (avoid speaking when it's not necessary to speak)

RULES OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION

1. Avoid casual (unnecessary and unimportant) communication to people of the opposite gender
2. Use kind and proper words – not words that are rude, emotional or that arouse inappropriate feelings
3. Make sure what you speak or write is true, good and useful/relevant – avoid giving opinions on subjects you have little or no knowledge on.
4. Make sure you are not bullying someone online!

Review Questions

Q1. The rules of speech and minding the tongue in Islam only apply to:

a. Verbal communication
b. Online communication
c. Dressing
d. Any form of communication which involves words in any format.

Q2. Provide an example for 1 vice and 1 virtue of the actions of the tongue and explain briefly the effects of each action.

Q3. [ix]Provide one hadith from the Ahlul Bayt (as) on the importance of minding the tongue/speaking/speech, which is not provided in the lesson above.

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[i] Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 23
[ii] Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 257
[iii] Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 263
[iv] *Mizan ul Hikma, p. 978*
[v] Mizan ul Hikma, p. 862
[vi] *Mizan ul Hikma, p. 508*
[vii] Mizan ul Hikma, p. 151
[viii] *Mizan ul Hikma, p. 369*
[ix] **REFERENCES**

Mizan Ul Hikmah – book of Hadith
Holy Qur'an – Surah Baqara (Surah 2) and Surah Balad (Surah 90)
Social Rules in Islam Lecture Notes – Sheikh Mansour Leghaei on Minding the Tongue (as)

Backbiting

SOCIAL ISLAM **LEVEL 5**

الغيبة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- **Be reminded of what it means to backbite/gossip and be able to distinguish it from slander**
- **Understand the motivations for backbiting and slander and how to avoid them**
- **Know the social and emotional effects of backbiting and slander**
- **Understand that backbiting is forbidden in Islam**
- **Understand the exceptions to the rules about backbiting**
- **Know how to seek forgiveness for backbiting**

Backbiting

We have learnt in the past that backbiting (Ghībah) is regarded as a major sin in Islam, and that the reality of backbiting which will be shown to us in the hereafter is illustrated by the following āyah:

"…nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?..."
Holy Qur'an 49:12

Revealing a bad quality of a believer which is in reality found to be true is called Ghībah (backbiting). However, accusing someone of something in their absence which is untrue is called Tohmah (slander). In English, we often describe these both with the term 'gossip'.

These evil acts can be performed in a number of ways:

1. In our face to face conversations or gatherings.
2. Over the phone when speaking to others.
3. Through online communications such as chatting (iMessage, Whatsapp, Viber etc.) or sharing posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Insulting others publicly or highlighting their sins and mistakes whether true or not come under this category.
4. Listening to someone else backbiting without taking actions to stop or discourage is also not permitted.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

"The one who listens to Ghībah
is one of those who perform Ghībah"[i]

WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS?

There are various reasons as to why one might backbite or slander others. We must understand these motivations and identify them if they exist within ourselves and then remove them. Backbiting is mainly due to the evil traits of jealousy, pride and hatred, and might occur because one wants to:

- Damage other people's reputation in order to make themselves look better.
- Gain revenge on a person that they have a grudge or grievance against.
- Entertain those around them by mocking someone who is absent.
- Pass the time by having something to talk about.

EFFECTS OF BACKBITING

The following two quotes from Prophet Muḥammad (saw) exemplify the effect of backbiting on a believer:

"Allah will not keep a person who reveals the fault of a Mu'min, along with him in Paradise, and if he accuses him of faults the Mu'min does not have, the pure relationship of their faith will be destroyed and the back biter will forever dwell in Hell, which is a dreadful place."[ii]

"Ghība affects the religion of a person faster than leprosy spreads in human body."[iii]

As stated in these narrations, backbiting destroys the faith of a believer and cuts the beautiful relationship that they have with Allah (SWT).

There is also a deep and disturbing social effect of backbiting. Backbiting destroys trust within a community and takes away the reputation of members. It creates enmity and division in friendships, parternships and even families and marriages. One of the traits of Allah (SWT) is that he is The Concealer and we must aspire to be like Him and cover up the faults of others rather than revealing them. It is by concealing the shortcomings of others that we can give them a chance to grow and protect their dignity.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says,

"Ghība is exposing that aspect of your brother which Allah had concealed."[iv]

FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM

In the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says:

"Wayl (Hell) is for every Slanderer, defamer,"
Holy Quran 104: 1

From all that we have learnt so far, it is clear that backbiting and slandering are both among the major sins and severe punishments have been promised for them. This is because they spoil the character and name of people and cause others to think badly about them, all this while they are not even given the chance to be there to defend themselves.

Backbiting & slander are therefore regarded as betrayal and must be removed from our communities if we are to be able to trust each other and unite with one another. The first step of this process is that we take action ourselves, and block those around us from this evil by:

1. Telling them that we do not want to listen to this
2. Leaving that gathering or conversation, unless we really cannot
3. Defending the person who is being criticised

SLANDER

As we have learnt, slander is accusing others in their absence of what is not true, and circulating myths about them. Allah (SWT) in Surat al-Nūr describes the punishment of those who perform this act:

"Surely those who love that slander should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter. Allah knows, and you know not."
Holy Quran 24:19

This surah goes on to warn that the punishment for slander is especially severe if a person accuses another of immoral sexual acts, because such accusations are especially hurtful and damaging.

WHEN IS BACKBITING PERMITTED?

There are some circumstances when mentioning a person's sin in their absence is not considered Ghība:

- When a person sins openly and his sins are known to all, such as if a person roams the streets with a bottle of wine on his lips.

"One who sins openly is not worthy of respect and his Ghībah is not Ḥarām"[v]

- When an oppressed person complains about the oppressor and mentions his acts of injustice, it is not Ghībah
- When one discusses the defects of a patient with their doctor in order to help treat the patient.
- When a person enquires about another person whom they are interested to marry, one should let the person making the enquiry know of any necessary issues that may affect the future marriage.
- [vi]When a person narrates false narrations and gives false testimonies or brings new innovations into religion. Ghība of such a person is allowed to ensure that people are not misled by his falsehood.

SEEKING FORGIVENESS

In order to repent from this sin, we must:

1. Regret the act.
2. Seek forgiveness from Allah (SWT).
3. Have the intention of never repeating the act.
4. If the person has heard of what we have said about them, we must seek their forgiveness and try to repair their reputation. However, if he has not, there is no need to ask forgiveness from them directly, but we must make sure we seek Allah's forgiveness and try to stop the things we said from spreading.
5. We must make up for the ill which we have said by speaking well about the person to others.

Review Questions

Q1. Ghībah means to:

a. Tell a lie about someone behind their back
b. Tell a good thing about someone behind their back.
c. Tell a true defect or sin of someone behind their back.

Q2. Slander is defined as:

a. Falsely accusing someone of something in their absence.
b. Accusing someone of something which is true in their absence.
c. Speaking well of someone in their absence.

Q3. Which of the following should one NOT do when seeking forgiveness for backbiting?

a. Regret the act and never intend to do it again.
b. Try to restore the person's reputation by speaking well about them in their absence and retracting their ill words.
c. Repeat the backbiting after 40 days.

[i] Makasibul Muharima
[ii] Makasibul Muharima
[iii]al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 357
[iv] Makasib, al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 358
[v] Makasib Muhrima page 27, Vol. 4

Further References:

Islamic Ethics and Morality: Why are Gheebat and Tohmat Haraam? - http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/mis56.asp#islamic

Backbiting (Gheebah) - http://www.islamic-laws.com/backbiting.htm#Traditions_on_Ghība__
Greater Sins; The Complete Book, **by Ayatullah Abdul Husayn Dastaghaib Shirazi**, Chapter 44, The Forty-first Greater Sin: Backbiting - http://www.al-islam.org/greater_sins_complete/
Social Rules in Islam, 'Backbiting' – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

Avoiding Arguments

SOCIAL ISLAM **LEVEL 5**

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know that different people have different opinions about things and as a Muslim we have to respect and tolerate other's opinions as long as they are not destructive to Islam.
- Know that in order to defend Islam, arguments and conflict do not help (with examples)
- Know the ills of arguing and the psychology of arguing
- Understand that arguing can have many destructive effects on the person, family and the society
- Know some ways of avoiding arguments
- Understand that Allah does not like those who argue and fight between themselves.

Avoiding Arguments

DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS

One of the beautiful things about humans is that Allah (SWT) has created us each with our own way of thinking and no two people are alike. This is a major blessing in terms of being able to independently use our intellect and wisdom to understand our society and Creator, and distinguishes us from animals. However, a problem that often unnecessarily results from our differing opinions, views, and knowledge is argument and conflict.

Arguments can easily be avoided if we learn to communicate correctly with one another and respect and tolerate one another. As Muslims, we must maintain a high level of moral discipline and be able to politely yet firmly present our beliefs without becoming angry, raising our voice, or being dragged into arguments. We must learn how to not allow others to enrage us or argue with us for hours and hours without any benefit to either party.

We must learn to be able to judge whether the person we are conversing with is truly open to understanding and accepting our viewpoint or if they simply want to impose their viewpoints on us, and move away as soon as we realise that it is becoming an unproductive argument. Allah (SWT) teaches us that when we meet such people, instead of arguing and quarrelling we have

to agree to disagree, and respect and tolerate their opinions as long as they are not destructive to Islam.

What this means is that if someone, for example, is of the opinion that all Muslims must be removed from a particular land we must stand against them as they are destructive to Islam and cannot simply respect and tolerate them. Other than such exceptions, we must try to coexist with mutual respect and tolerance, exemplified by the Ayah:

"To you be your religion, and to me my religion" (109:6)

Sometimes we feel that in order to defend Islam we must argue or have conflict with someone. For example, a classmate may be saying rude things about the Holy Prophet (saw) and we might think that it is our duty to defend him by physically or verbally attacking the person.

Yes, it is our duty to defend the Holy Prophet but it is also our duty to maintain our morals and swallow our anger and address the issue in a civilised manner. This is exemplified by the kindness demonstrated by the Holy Prophet and our Imams when people mocked or verbally abused them.

Attacking the person either physically or verbally would only make such situations worse and the best thing to do is to swallow our anger, calm down, and politely talk with the person – perhaps some time after in private. The best way to deal with each situation may vary based on the circumstances but we must keep in mind these principles and act in accordance with our wisdom and patience.

PSYCHOLOGY OF ARGUING

There are many reasons why people argue:

1- Sometimes we feel we know the truth and need to share it with others and when others do not agree and are not prepared to listen, an argument erupts. Being able to avoid quarrelling even when we are right is amongst the traits of the righteous.

2- Sometimes we think that we would be perceived as weak if we admit to being wrong and might argue or raise our voice unnecessarily due to our pride even when we know that we are wrong. As Muslims, we are encouraged to submit to the truth however painful it may be and to take responsibility for our mistakes.

3- Sometimes we argue and rebel when we want to be heard, when we feel no one is listening to us and we feel frustrated. This is as a result of anger. This kind of anger is also prohibited in Islam. Imam 'Ali (a) said:

"Protect yourself from anger for its beginning is insanity and its end is remorse."[i]

4- Sometimes we get defensive and argue when we are criticized about something we have done. This is because we have pride in our hearts and do not have the capacity to take criticism well. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) encourages to be open to constructive criticism:

"Amongst my brothers my favourite is one who informs me of my failings and defects"[ii].

5- Sometimes we are completely ignorant of an issue and yet we argue. This is the most disliked from of argument and is a symptom of a disease of the soul. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

"Avoid arguing, for it leads to disease of the heart".

6- Sometimes we are bored and have nothing to talk about so we start arguments on issues that have no relevance in this world or the next (blue is better than white!?). This Idle talk is also highly discouraged in Islam.

7- Sometimes we argue due to wanting to demonstrate our superiority over another

person and feeding into our pride. This can be over issues such as nationality, tribe, family, and sports team. As Muslims we must also avoid such arguments.

THE EFFECTS OF BEING ARGUMENTATIVE

Entering arguments unnecessarily has many destructive effects on the person, the family and society in general:

- It leads to animosity between the people arguing and therefore a lack of trust and co-operation especially if arguments happen between friends and family. It can destroy relationships leading to divorce, family feuds and sometimes often lead to major sins such as backbiting, lying etc…
- It leads to the faults of people being exposed and therefore the erosion of trust between people.
- It can waste a lot of time and often perpetuates ignorance and malice.
- It brings about enmity: even though we may be trying to convince a person of the truth, if we are very argumentative, we may end up driving people away from us.
- It brings anger, frustration, headaches, and hatred between the people involved.

PREVENTING QUARRELS

As Muslims we are encouraged to stop arguments to the extent that we can even lie to bring believers closer.

" And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably (49:9)

Here, Allah (SWT) commands that we have to promote peace between believers this, especially between biological brothers and sisters.

HOW CAN WE STOP BEING ARGUMENTATIVE?

There are several ways in which we can stop being argumentative:

- Agreeing to disagree - This is the most effective means and is encouraged in Islam as we have discussed.
- Differentiating between a discussion and an argument. A discussion is when both parties present their points politely and respectfully and intend to gain knowledge or increase understanding, rather than simply demonstrate that they are right in order to feed their pride and feel better about themselves. Well-mannered and constructive discussions are very much encouraged in Islam, provided that we are knowledgeable on the issue.
- Avoiding arguments and discussions where one has little or no knowledge on the subject.
- Accepting criticism and not considering it a personal attack.
- Avoiding talking back in anger/frustration and instead discussing disagreements once we have calmed down later on. Arguments are often more lethal when in anger and one should avoid and be very passive to an angry person, and not incite them further with aggressive comments in return.
- Trying to look at issues from the viewpoints of others and see their reasoning behind their actions. As Muslims, we are taught to make excuses for others.
- Avoid places of idle talk and ignorance especially online chat rooms and arguments on social media (Facebook etc...) and similarly avoid people who like to argue.

ALLAH DISLIKES THOSE WHO QUARREL

"The believers are but a single Brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your two contending

brothers, and observe your duty to God, that you may receive mercy." (49:10)

It is clear from this āyah that Allah (SWT) loves those who act righteously and create peace and reconciliation, and dislikes those who argue and quarrel. Therefore, as Muslims we must make sure we maintain a high level of manners and practice patience when disputes arise. [iii]

Review Questions

1. **Arguing a lot:**
    a. Improves our debating skills
    b. Improves our reputation
    c. Leads to disease of the heart
2. **If someone is not willing to listen to the truth, we are encouraged to:**
    a. Get angry at them and never give up until they start listening
    b. Speak to them in a calm and mannered way, and leave them be if they do not want to accept
    c. Get our friends to join in and try to convince them as well. They will be scared of big numbers
3. **We can stop being argumentative by:**
    a. Agreeing to disagree, knowing the difference between a discussion and an argument, and accepting criticism.
    b. Making our voice louder and louder

c. Discussing what we have little or no knowledge of.

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[i] Al-Amidi, Gharar ul-Hikam wa darar ulKalim, hadith # 2635
[ii] Bihar, Vol 74, Page 282
[iii] Social Rules in Islam, 'Avoiding Arguments' – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 5-11

Akhlaq- Spiritual Instincts and Spiritual Diseases

5. Shahwah
6. Ghadhab
7. Hasad
8. Riyaa
9. Takabbur
10. ‘Ujb
11. Ya’s

Lesson 5

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Learning Objectives:
1- Understand what the science of akhlaaq is about, and what are the two main areas it is concerned with.
2- Explain what shahwah is, why Allah created us with it, and what does it mean to have a balanced approach towards shahwah
3- List some of the negative consequences of shahwah when it comes to food and human beings, and the positive benefits of controlling shahwah in those cases.
4- Give some practical ways of being able to control shahwah

Akhlaaq

The word 'Akhlaaq' in Arabic is the plural of the word 'khulq'. 'Khulq' is an internal state or characteristics. It is the opposite of 'khalq' which refers to the outer shape and characteristics of a human being.

The study of 'akhlaaq' has to do with
1) explaining what internal characteristics are good and what are bad
2) how to go about acquiring good characteristics and staying away from bad characteristics.

It is possible for us to change our 'khalq' to a certain extent, but there are limitations (Note to teacher: discuss some of these limitations). However, when it comes to akhlaaq, it is possible for someone who has good characteristics to take on bad ones, and vice-versa.

Allah has made us in a certain way. Within our souls there is the instinct of 'shahwah' and the instinct of 'ghadab'. Everyone is born with these instincts.

'Shahwah' means being inclined towards physical beauty
'Ghadab' means wanting to escape from difficulty and harm

Allah gave us these forces for a reason. They can be used for very good and necessary purposes (like eating food to stay alive) but they can also be used to

pull us in the wrong direction (like by tempting us to make fun of someone we perceive as a threat) and eventually they can take us over and consume us.

Life is meant to be a struggle where we gain control over these forces with a force that is stronger than them which is the 'aql' - with our power of reasoning, we ought to be able to control our forces of shahwah and ghadab and use them in a way that we can worship Allah in the best way possible. This struggle is called 'jihad' - not just the jihad of the battlefield, but rather the greater or major jihad, which is the struggle against the evil elements of the self.

Shahwah

In this lesson we will learn more about Shahwah. Shahwah is often translated as 'lust'. It is a gift from Allah when used properly. However, it can also be misused, cause one's soul to be blackened, and ultimately lead someone away from Allah.

Shahwah refers to our instinctual attraction towards physical beauty - things that can be seen, heard, tasted, touched, and smelled. (Note to teacher: Give a few examples in each of these categories)

When the attraction is a) for something halal b) a means not an ends and c) kept in balance, there is nothing wrong with having this attraction. In fact, it is a blessing of Allah. For example, if I am hungry, and there is a plate of tasty food which contains halal food, which I am going to eat so that I can worship Allah better, and from which I am going to eat the amount necessary in order to take care of my hunger, having attraction for that food is perfectly ok.

Another example is the attraction that Allah places between a husband and a wife, which helps to strengthen a family.

Yet another example is our attraction towards beautiful recitation of the Qur'an, as long as we listen to it for the purpose of learning and being reminded.

That is why some type of shahwah is 'halal' and other types are 'haram'. Even though shahwah can apply to both, in Qur'an and hadith, it often refers to the haram type.

There are two types of shahwah that the Ahlul Bayt (a) warned us about more than others: lust towards human beings, and lust towards food.

Shahwah towards Human Beings

Allah has placed with us attraction towards other human beings, and the purpose of this attraction is to create and strengthen families. It is one of the strongest instincts that human beings possess. However, when someone attempts to satisfy this attraction is satisfied outside of marriage, it can lead to severe problems. This is why the Qur'an and Ahlul Bayt (a) have warned us to take control of this instinct or else we will face the consequences. Imam Ali (a) says, "How often it is that a moment of lust can bring about a long period of grief." (Note to teacher: discuss here some examples of how a moment of lust can cause someone's downfall).

The Prophet (s) said, "The first glance is for you, and the second glance is against you and not to your advantage." This is because we often make eye contact with others either because we pass by them or we need to establish a line of communication. However, we have to be careful to keep the glance pure, and if someone were to stare a second time with lust, this would be a sin and would cause spiritual darkness.

The Prophet (s) said, "Looking at someone with lust is a poisoned arrow from Iblis." This is because there is an initial spiritual damage caused by committing the sin of looking with lust. But often, this look can lead to further sins.

He also is reported to have said: "Whoever fills his eyes with haraam, Allah will fill his eyes on the Day of Judgment with fire – unless he repents and leaves it aside."

On the other hand, the Ahlul Bayt (a) also gave us good news of the effects of someone who is able to control his / her shahwah. The Prophet (s) says, "Glad tidings are for the one who leaves aside lust which is immediate in return for a promise that he has not yet seen." He also said, "For one who refrains from looking inappropriately, Allah will place in his/heart the sweetness of imaan (faith) that he/she will be able to sense."

Zinaa, or fornication, is for improper relationships to take place between a man and a woman without an Islamic contract of marriage. The Qur'an warns us,

"Do not approach fornication. It is indeed an indecency and an evil way. (17:32)" There are other types of fornication as well. Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (a) said: "…One can fornicate with his/her eyes by looking at that which is forbidden, and with his/her mouth by kissing that which is forbidden, and with his/her hands by touching that which is forbidden…" Imam al-Sadiq (a) said, "The one who will face the most severe punishment on the Day of Judgment is the man who fornicates with a non-mahram." The Prophet (s) said, "The greatest of misdeeds that one can perform in front of Allah is to kill a Prophet of God, to destroy the Ka'bah, or to fornicate with a non-mahram."

Similarly, the Qur'an condemns interacting with non-mahrams in a way that would provoke lust (33:32) and also forbids boyfriend / girlfriend relationships (4:25 and 5:5).

Unfortunately, the society we are in promotes shahwah towards human beings through Hollywood, TV, music videos, advertisements, and the general lack of modesty in dress and relationships. In recent times, there has been a concerned effort to promote shahwah even towards the same gender, whereas Islam forbids acting on such an attraction. (Note to teacher: Discuss some of the ways that the society promotes shahwah.) Therefore, a Muslim needs to take extra care to control his/her eyes and interactions with others.

Shahwah towards Food

Attraction towards food is a blessing and is a reason for why we can stay alive. But when this attraction goes to the extreme and results in overeating, it leads to negative consequences such as: not being able to think clearly and darkness of the heart. On the other hand, some of the positive effects of eating in a healthy, balanced manner are: clearness and softness of the heart, greater insight, remembrance of Allah, sympathy with the poor and needy, taming lust towards human beings, less need for sleep, better readiness for worship, waking earlier in the morning, and better physical health.

This does *not* mean that according to Islamic teachings, we should try to eat as little as possible and go throughout the day feeling hungry. The key is to have a balance - we ought to eat enough in order to be comfortable, but try not to overeat.

Controlling Shahwah

Here are some practical ways of controlling shahwah from the teachings of the Qur'an and the Ahul Bayt (a):

1. **Prevention before Cure** : It is much easier to control shahwah when it has not been given the opportunity to grow and become stronger. The Qur'an says not only should we not follow the Shaytan, but we shouldn't even follow his footsteps. This usually begins with controlling one's eyes and one's verbal and non-verbal communication with others. The Qur'an says in Surah Noor (24): 30-31, "Tell the faithful men to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts. That is more decent for them. Allah is indeed well aware of what they do. And tell the faithful women to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts…"

2. **Keeping the Balance**: Islam doesn't prevent us from eating tasty food, or having proper, decent relationships with family and close friends from the same gender. It's essential to have a balance where we satisfy our *shahwah* in halal ways while keeping in mind the three conditions mentioned above.

3. **Remembering Allah:** By constantly reminding ourselves we are in the presence of Allah, we can act in a way that is befitting of a slave in front of his/her master, as opposed to rebelling, especially when we imagine that we are alone.

Questions:
- How does the society we are in promote shahwah of the eyes and shahwah towards other human beings?
- Is it advisable to kill one's shahwah?
- What are some of the negative consequences of having uncontrolled shahwah?
- What is *jihad al-nafs?*

Lesson 6

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what ghadab is, why Allah created us with it, and what does it mean to have a balanced form of ghadab (not too little and not too much)
2- List some of the negative spiritual and social consequences of ghadab and the positive benefits of controlling ghadab
3- Give some practical ways of being able to control ghadab

Definition of Ghadab

Ghadab is an instinct that all human beings have which is to want to deflect things which are harmful, dangerous, and unpleasant. (Note to Teacher: Ask students for examples of things towards which we have ghadab, and categorize these into when it is a good thing to demonstrate ghadab, and when it is a bad thing.)

Ghadab that is Praiseworthy

This instinct, like shahwah, is placed within the human being for a purpose. Without ghadab, human beings could easily be taken advantage of. They would not have the will to defend themselves against adversaries. Even though 'ghadab' is normally translated as anger, in such circumstances the instinct of 'ghadab' is better described as zeal and passion.

Ghadab that is Condemned

However, like shahwah, ghadab can be demonstrated in an unchecked way and result in spiritual flaws such as: being a person who is angry and irritable, always complains and is never satisfied, swears a lot, and/or is always holding grudges . It can also open the door to acts of arrogance (*takabbur*) and jealousy (*hasad*). (Note to teacher: Ask students to explore the connection between unchecked ghadab and each of these traits).

Ghadab becomes a sin and *haram* where in a situation where we are supposed to demonstrate *sabr* (self-restraint), we instead react in an angry way.

Negative Consequences of Unchecked Ghadab

Unchecked ghadab has many negative consequences. Ahadith tell us some of the negative consequences of ghadab are:
1) Key to all evils: Someone whose anger is unchecked can easily go on to committing other evil deeds, like backbiting, striking and hurting someone, slander, and using foul language
2) Makes a human being worthless: Human beings are supposed to be different than animals, but by having unchecked ghadab, we become just like predatory animals and lose our humanity. For example, wolves will maul or kill animals even when they don't need to eat them.
3) Leads to one's hidden flaws being exposed: In the state of rage, people often demonstrate their hidden prejudices and self-centered perspectives. The worst of them comes to the forefront.
4) A flame from the fire within: Anger when demonstrated on the outside stems from anger inside, and unjustified anger inside is a manifestation of the fire of hell.
5) The beginning of it is insanity and the end is regret: Those who are in a state of anger are similar to those who have lost their sanity, and later, when they come out of the fit of rage, they often regret their actions.
6) Leads to one giving up the ability to think rationally
7) Leads to one's imaan being spoilt

Beyond these negative spiritual consequences, there are social consequences to unchecked anger as well. People who are known to have a bad temper, be obnoxious, and/or frequently cause scenes tend not to be well-liked or popular. Imam Ali (a) instructs us, "Live amongst people in such a manner that if you die they weep over you and if you are alive they crave for your company."

Positive Results of Controlling Ghadab

The trait of being able to control one's ghadab is called *kadhm al-ghaydh*. The Qur'an describes the *muttaqeen* (those who possess *taqwa*) as having the trait of *al-kaadhimeen al-ghaydh* (Surah Aal Imraan 3:134) - those who suppress their anger.

The Prophet (s) is reported to have said, "The best swallow that one can swallow for the sake of Allah is the swallow of anger." Imam al-Baqir (a) said,

"One who swallows his anger, even though he is capable of acting upon it, Allah will fill his heart with peace and faith on the Day of Judgment."

Practical Ways of Treating Ghadab

1. Carefully monitor your actions and in particular the way you treat others. This will help you understand the extent to which unchecked ghadab can be the influence the choices you make.

2. Learn about the negative worldly and spiritual consequences of ghadab, and carefully reflect over the gravity of these consequences.

3. Learn about the positive worldly and spiritual benefits of controlling ghaab, and carefully reflect over the wondrous nature of these benefits.

4. Whenever you feel anger developing,
a) Say "A`oodhu billahi min ash-shaytaan ar-rajeem." Allah says, "Should a temptation from Satan disturb you, seek the protection of Allah. Indeed He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing. (Fussilat 41:36)
b) Do something to modify the situation. The ahadith give us example of how this may be done: sit if you are standing, stand if you are sitting, placing one's head on the ground in *sujood*, or leaving the room.
c) Do not speak when angry. Instead, remain silent and excuse yourself until the rage has subsided.
d) Remind yourself of the power of Allah. The Prophet (s) said to Imam Ali (a), "O Ali! Do not get angry! But if you get angry, sit and ponder upon the power of the Lord over His servants, and His forbearance (*hilm*) with them." There are many times where the servants of Allah disobey Him despite being aware of His command. Yet Allah is forbearing despite His knowledge of their sinfulness. We can learn from His forbearance and be forbearing towards others.

(Note to Teacher: Have students role play scenarios where they demonstrate some of the techniques mentioned for controlling ghadab)

Questions:
- How do Hollywood and video games promote negative expressions of *ghadab* in our society?
- Is it advisable to completely uproot one's ghadab?

- What are some of the negative consequences of having uncontrolled ghadab?
- Give a practical scenario that demonstrates one or more of the techniques mentioned above for controlling ghadab.

Lesson 7

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what Hasad is and what is the line beyond which it is prohibited
2- List some of the negative spiritual and physical consequences of Hasad
3- Give some practical ways of being able to treat Hasad
4- Compare and contrast Hasad and Ghibtah

Definition of Hasad

Hasad is one of the diseases of the soul, and is usually translated as 'jealousy', and sometimes as 'envy.' The precise definition of *Hasad* from Islamic sources is a state of heart where
a) I am unhappy about what somebody has, whether it is a possession, status, or some trait
b) I wish for that person to not have that thing

One who has Hasad is called a *Haasid* (a jealous person). The target of the Haasid's Hasad is referred to as the *Mahsood* (one whom the *Haasid* is jealous about).

Hasad is a state that comes the heart, and it is natural for somebody to see other's people success and to be tempted to feel unhappy over it. It is important to identify the boundary where this feeling becomes *haram*:

1) When the feeling of unhappiness is sensed, it is actively combatted (through *jihad an-nafs*), and is not acted upon, then it is not haram.
2) When the feeling of unhappiness is felt, entertained within, and eventually leads to doing something which is haram (like gheebah, or plotting to remove that blessing from the person), then it is haram.
3) When the feeling of unhappiness is felt, it is entertained within, no efforts are made to combat it, but it is not acted upon, it is not haram. However, it does lead to spiritual consequences, and the spiritual pollution that is created can easily lead to one committing sins.

Seriousness of Hasad

Hasad is a serious disease of the soul. In Surah al-Falaq 113 verse 5, Allah instructs us specifically to seek refuge in Him from the evil of one who has Hasad towards us. This makes us aware that
a) Hasad is a danger we need to be aware of
b) we need to actively seek Allah's help in removing it from our souls
c) we need to actively seek Allah's help in protecting us from the Hasad of others.

The story of the sons of Nabi Adam (Al-Maidah 5:27-28), Iblis refusing to bow to Nabi Adam (a) (Al-Araaf 7:12), and the harsh treatment Nabi Yusuf (a) received from his brothers (Yusuf 12:8-10) all present Hasad as a destructive factor that can motivate one towards sin and rebellion.

Signs of Hasad

Hasad displays itself in different ways. In a tradition reported from Imam as-Sadiq (a), Luqman tells his son, "There are three signs of one who has Hasad: He does gheebah of the *Mahsood* when he is not present, he flatters the *Mahsood* in his presence, and he gloats over difficulties that befall the *Mahsood*."

The reason he does gheebah of the *Mahsood* is because he doesn't like the blessing the *Mahsood* has, and wants others to not see the *Mahsood* as being blessed.
He flatters the *Mahsood* in his presence is because he wants to try and hide his true feelings and goes to the opposite extreme in doing so.
He gloats over the *Mahsood's* difficulties because he is troubled when the *Mahsood* is blessed, and is therefore happy when the *Mahsood's* blessings are removed.

Negative Effects of Hasad

1) Ruin and wretchedness: Imam Ali (a) said, "When the rain of Hasad falls, corruption will grow."
2) Uneasiness: A Haasid is always in a state of worry and uneasy about others and is never content and in peace with him/herself.
3) Loss of iman: Imam al-Baqir (a) said, "Hasad eats away at imaan like fire eats away at wood." Hasad encourages one to doubt in Allah's justice and question why Allah favored the Mahsood over the Haasid. It can eventually

lead to someone doubting in the existence of Allah.
4) Destroys the body: A constant state of worry and unhappiness affects the body negatively. Imam Ali (a) said, “Hasad melts away the body.”

Ways of Treating Hasad

1) *Strengthening our understanding of Tawheed*: The teachings of Tawheed tell us that blessings are not dispersed randomly. Rather, Allah, the Rabb, decides whom to give to and how much to give. If He gives someone a blessing that He does not give to me, and I sense a feeling of Hasad, I need to remind myself that:
a) Allah is aware that I want that blessing but is choosing not to give it to me
b) Allah is capable of giving it to me but is choosing not to
c) Allah makes His decisions on the basis of wisdom
Knowing this can give me comfort and trust in the decision and decree of Allah. It also reassures me that if I strive to obtain that blessing through the ways Allah has shown me, if He knows it’s in my best interest, He will give it to me as well.

2) *Understanding the negative consequences of Hasad, and coming to terms with their severity:* This includes the negative consequences mentioned in verses of the Qur’an and ahadith, as well as the severe punishment that Iblis faced due to his Hasad.

3) *Pay attention to those who are less fortunate and given less, rather than those who have been given more material blessings:* Keeping company with those who have been given a lot more than I have can easily make me jealous. On the contrary, spending time with the oppressed can motivate me to show gratitude to Allah for what He has given me.

4) *Do good towards those the Mahsood:* Sincerely doing good to the *Mahsood* and displaying love to him/her is a strong way of combating the internal feeling of jealousy and unlocking

Difference between Hasad and Ghibtah

Ghibtah is a trait of the soul that is usually translated as envy. If you see a blessing that someone else has, and you wish to have the same thing for yourself, this feeling is called ‘Ghibtah’. Unlike Hasad, Ghibtah is usually not

negative. It would only be negative if what you desire is haram or harmful.

Ghibtah differs from Hasad in two ways:
- With Ghibtah, you want the blessing the other person has, but you don't wish for it to be taken away from him / her
- Ghibtah is a positive motivating factor to compel you to work hard to attain what you desire, whereas Hasad does not give such motivation

Questions
- Look up the Qur'anic stories referenced in this lesson, and explain the role of *Hasad* in the story
- What is the connection between Hasad and Tawheed?
- What are some of the signs of Hasad, and its negative effects?
- How would you counsel someone who came to you and complained about being jealous of a classmate always getting better results?

Lesson 8

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Spiritual Disease of Riyaa': Ostentation (Showing Off / Putting on a Show)

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what Riyaa is, and when talking about one's good traits and accomplishments and/or doing good actions publicly is not considered Riyaa
2- List some of the negative spiritual consequences of Riyaa
3- Give some practical ways of being able to detect Riyaa and to avoid it

Definition of Riyaa'

Riyaa' is used to describe someone who acts ostentatiously, meaning that he/she wants to show off or to put on a show for the sake of someone or some people other than Allah. The showing off can be in the form of an action that is performed in order to impress others, or in the form of flaunting a skill, quality, or possession. It can be done in order to gain the admiration of others, or to put on a show of being a certain way or having a certain quality that differs from reality.

Riyaa' is indicative of a spiritual disease that can lead to serious consequences, and so it is important to be able to identify what Riyaa' is, how to diagnose it, and how to treat it.

What is not Riyaa'

It is possible for one to do good things or talk about his / her good qualities in a public manner but for the sake of Allah and for a divine purpose. (Note to teacher: Ask students to come up with their own examples of this prior to mentioning what follows). Examples of this include:
- Giving charity openly in the presence of others in order to encourage them to give charity as well
- Sharing one's positive experience in performing Hajj, Umrah, or ziyarah, or attending a lecture or class in order to motivate others to do the same

- When a teacher asks a question in class and all other students remain silent, answering the question in order to demonstrate to the teacher that his / her teaching is having a positive effect
- Reciting Qur'an, du'a, a nasheed, or a latmiyyah in public with a beautiful voice in order to remember Allah and seek the blessings of Allah for a particular occasion

But when actions are done in order to impress others, or when accomplishments are bragged about in order to gain others' admiration, Riyaa' is present.

Sometimes, when performing an act of worship like *salah*, the thought of impressing someone may enter your mind. The mere presence of a thought does not qualify to be Riyaa'. But if the thought is entertained and acted upon, Riyaa' is present.

There is a difference between doing something for the sake of someone other than Allah, and being happy when others find out about our good deeds. Once, Imam al-Baqir (a) was asked about a man who performs a good deed that someone else sees, and it makes him happy that the other person has seen the good deed. He replied, "There is no problem in it. Everyone loves for his / her goodness to be apparent to the people. But it is not a problem as long as he / she did not do it for this reason."

When is a Good Deed Beneficial

In order to understand the significance of riyaa', we first need to understand what makes up a good deed from an Islamic perspective. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah mentions *alladheena aamanoo wa 'amiloo as-saalihaat* (الذين آمنوا و عملوا الصالحات) - those who believe and do good deeds - as as a description of those who will be successful. For example, "And those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they shall be the inhabitants of paradise" (Al-Baqarah 2:82) and "Allah has promised those who have faith and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward" (Al-Maidah 5:9). This means that from an Islamic perspective, it's not enough for a deed to be good - rather, the deed has to be performed with *imaan,* and for the sake of Allah.

Sometimes an action that is performed can itself be evil. This will cause harmful effect to one's soul.

But sometimes the action can be good, but the reason for why it is performed is other than Allah.

If that action is meant to be for Allah only (meaning that is an act of *ibadah,* like salah or performing hajj), then by committing the act for someone else, one has done something *haram,* and furthermore, the act will be *baatil* (invalid).

There are other actions that are not *ibadah*, but they can be good actions to perform. Examples include eating a meal, spending time with family, having Islamically appropriate fun, cleaning oneself, going to school or work, or going to sleep. (Note to teacher: Ask the students if these actions are always good to perform or not? Then explore scenarios of where these examples would not be good to perform). If they are performed for the sake of Allah, they can be a source of spiritual growth.

Types of Riyaa'

Riyaa can take place in different forms, such as:

Riyaa' in body and dress:

One's choice of body language and types of dressing / fashion can be a way of showing off and flaunting one's wealth or trying to position oneself as something that he / she is not. (Note to teacher: Explore relevant examples with students here. In some scenarios, displaying symbols of status and wealth be acceptable if no haram is committed and there is a justifiable reason for doing so. In other cases, doing such things can be a means of acting out a lie and/or self promotion, which will lead to negative consequences.)

Riyaa' in speech:

Without taking care, the words we use can often be a means of self promotion and can sometimes be a means of making ourselves seem better than we actually are. Sometimes we can say things to gain favor with or flatter others even though we don't actually believe what we say. (Note to teacher: Explore relevant examples with students.)

Riyaa' in action:

An action that is performed for the sake of someone other than Allah, even if it is partially done for that other person and partially for Allah, is classified as Riyaa' and is a form of hidden shirk (associating a partner with God). Hidden shirk (*ash-shirk al-khafiyy*) is the opposite of open shirk (*ash-shirk al-jaliyy*) which involves openly worshipping entities other than Allah .

Signs of Riyaa'

According to a tradition reported from Imam Ali (a), there are three signs for someone who is afflicted with Riyaa':

1) He becomes enthusiastic when people see him
2) He becomes lazy when he is alone
3) He love to be praised for everything that he does

(Note to teacher: Go through relevant examples here of scenarios such as *salat al-jama'ah* and participating in an Islamic project and how people can display these signs).

Riyaa' can sometimes be very difficult to detect. Only by carefully guarding over our intentions can we be alerted to its presence.

For example, when performing good actions and feeling pleased at doing so, sometimes it becomes difficult to determine where this pleasure stems from. Does it come from knowing that Allah has blessed you with the opportunity to serve Him by being involved with a good cause? Or is it because people are noticing your accomplishments and praising you for what you have done?

A good way of determining which of the two you are experiencing is to ask yourself, if someone else were performing the same actions and accomplishing similar results, would you feel a similar level of happiness? Or would you be ambivalent, or even worse, feel jealous, if someone else were being recognized?

(Note to teacher: Ask students to come up with a scenario where you can apply a similar approach when deciding whether to say something in a

conversation that would reveal your personal talents or accomplishments.)

After learning what actions are good and bad, and committing to perform the good and refrain from the bad, being watchful over our intentions can be a key component in spiritual development.

Consequences of Riyaa'

1. *Ascribing a Partner to Allah*: Imam as-Sadiq (a) says, “Every act of Riyaa’ is a form of Shirk. Whoever performs an action for the people, his reward will be due from people. And whoever performs an action for Allah, his reward will be due from Allah.” Shirk is a grave sin and an act of injustice; Allah says, "When Luqman said to his son, as he advised him: 'O my son! Do not ascribe any partners to Allah. *Shirk* is indeed a great injustice.’" (Luqman 31:13)
2. *Being deprived of the reward from Allah:* This consequence is mentioned in the previously quoted hadith. It is also referred to in other traditions, such as the following Hadith al-Qudsi narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (a): “Allah, the Exalted and Mighty, says, ‘I am the best of partners. Whoever ascribes a partner to me in his actions, I will only accept from him what is purely for me.’" Analysis: Business partners are of three types: Evil - those who try to take the share of their partners; fair - those who divide the profits evenly; and benign - those who give their share to their partners. Allah is the best of partners because He doesn’t accept any action offered from His servants that is not exclusively for Him. So, for example, if you say your prayers because you want your parents to buy you an iPhone and also *qurbatan ilallah,* the only reward you will receive for the salah is the iPhone, as Allah will reject such a prayer.
3. *Consequences in the Hereafter:* According to hadith, one who does Riyaa’ will be subject to the wrath of Allah and will be deprived of the intercession of the Prophet (s) on the Day of Judgment.

Treatment

- Know that whatever good you do, Allah will eventually cause it to become apparent to others. Allah says, "Indeed those who have faith and do righteous deeds the All-beneficent will endear [them] to His creation” (Maryam 19:96). Allah is the one who owns the hearts of people and if He desires He will turn them towards us. He will “promote” us to others as necessary, and we should

avoid self-promotion and trying to say or do things for the pleasure of others independent of seeking the pleasure of Allah. Allah says, "...He knows you best since [the time] He produced you from the earth, and since you were fetuses in the bellies of your mothers. So do not flaunt your piety: He knows best those who are God wary." (53:23). In a tradition, the Prophet (s) says to Imam Ali (a), "O Ali! Allah revealed to the *dunya*, 'Serve one who serves me, and tire out the one who serves you!'"

- Try to hide your actions from others — in particular, *mustahab* actions like giving mustahab charity and performing extra prayers / dhikr. The Prophet (s) said to a companion, "Do not give charity in front of others so that they praise you! If you do that, you will have received your reward in full [from them and you will not receive anything from Allah]. Rather, if your right hand gives, let not your left hand know of it."

- Actively monitor your actions to see whether the signs above can be detected. Riyaa' can be extremely difficult to detect unless we monitor and review what we do and why we do it.

- Be satisfied with the reward of Allah and be unconcerned with the reward of the creation. As the Ahlul Bayt (a) would say, "We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks." (Al-Insaan 76:9).

- Be aware of the severe consequences of Riyaa' which can involve spiritual deprivation, incurring the wrath of Allah, and finding ourselves empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

Questions:
- Is bragging a form of Riyaa'?
- Imagine you were running for president of student council and you were given an opportunity to present yourself to the school body in a campaign speech. How would you do so in a way that would avoid Riyaa'?
- How can you detect Riyaa'?
- Why would Nabi Isa's words in Surah Aal Imraan (3:49) not be considered as Riyaa'?

Lesson 9

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Spiritual Disease of Takabbur: Pride and Arrogance

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what Takkabur is, what causes Takabbur, and when is it commendable vs. reprehensible
2- List some of the negative spiritual and social consequences of Takabbur
3- Give some practical ways of being able to avoid Takabbur

Introduction

Takabbur or *Kibr* is a state of the heart where you feel and/or act in a way that you are bigger and better than others. In most cases, having this feeling in the heart or acting in this way is negative, and can be indicative of a serious spiritual disease. In most cases, being a humble person is commendable.

However, in some cases, not being humble is commendable because of a greater purpose. (Note to teacher: before giving examples, have the students brainstorm their own). Some examples are:

- In a hostile environment, such as a battlefield or in the political arena, where being humble would be taken as a sign of weakness

- When interacting with people who are wealthy or powerful due to their wealth and power. However, being humble with a believer who happens to be rich or powerful is commendable when it is done for the sake of Allah.

- When dealing with someone who is arrogant, showing humbleness may sometimes be a source of causing the one who is arrogant and bullying others to continue doing so

- Imam Ali (a) says that one of the traits that is commendable for a woman to have particularly in dealing with a non-mahram man is the trait of 'Zahw' which means pride. (Nahj al-Balagha, Saying 234). In this context, it appears to mean that she shouldn't show humility that would lead to her sending a wrong signal to a non-mahram. Instead, she should interact in a professional

manner. It doesn't means she should be mean, haughty in a negative way, or inconsiderate, or that she should consider herself as better than that person.

Difference between Ujb and Takabbur

Ujb (being overly impressed with one's self, traits, and accomplishments independent of Allah) is one of the primary causes of Takabbur. But ujb can be a spiritual disease that is present even when no one else is in the picture, whereas Takabbur takes place with respect to someone else.

Story of Iblis

The Qur'an describes *Takabbur* as being the cause of the downfall of Iblis:

Certainly We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam." So they prostrated, but not Iblis: he was not among those who prostrated.
Said He, "What prevented you from prostrating, when I commanded you?" "I am better than him," he said. "You created me from fire and You created him from clay." "Get down from it!" He said." It is not for you to be arrogant therein. Begone! You are indeed among the degraded ones." (Al-A'araaf 7:11-13)

Points:
- "I am better than him": One who has Takabbur compares himself / herself to others and sees himself / herself as better
- "You created me from fire and You created him for clay": The basis of Iblis' feeling he was superior was his material creation. Fire dances and is attractive. Clay is static and unattractive. One's material possessions or looks are often the basis for feeling Takabbur towards others. Iblis derives an incorrect logical conclusion. Even if fire is better than clay (which itself is an assertion that would need to be proven), material superiority can't be generalized to imply overall superiority. Being better involves more than what you are made out of. (Note to teacher: using the lessons from this story, ask the student to come up with examples from our lives where people make similar generalizations.)

All the stories of Qur'an are meant to teach us lessons, and this particular story of the Qur'an is a very important story of the Qur'an. This helps us

understand the importance of being watchful about this spiritual disease and being eager to treat if we detect it.

Types of Takabbur

One of the way of categorizing Takabbur is with respect to the one towards whom we feel or act arrogantly:

Takabbur against Allah: By doing *kufr* and denying Allah, or even on a smaller scale by boldly committing sins, one does Takabbur towards Allah and asserts that his desire is superior to the desire of Allah.

Takabbur against the Prophet (s): Disparaging the rulings of Islam as taught by the Prophet (s) and his family is a way of seeing oneself as better than the Prophet. Sometimes this disparagement takes place in a subtle way. For example, there are some people who feel that Islam needs to be reformed to make it more compatible with Western ideology and lifestyle. For example, they find it inconvenient to fast for long hours. So, they say that the Prophet (s) and his family were wise and ethical people, but they spoke for people who lived at their time, and in our times we need to realize that circumstances have changed, and it's not reasonable that the Prophet (s) would have asked us to fast for such long hours.

The crux of such an argument challenges the Prophethood of the prophethood. It implies that the Prophet (s) either did not fulfill the responsibility of conveying the religion fully, or that he (s) was not capable of understanding our needs. (Note to teacher: question the students on why these are the two logical outcomes of the revisionist argument)

Takabbur against others: This is what is commonly termed as being arrogant and showing pride to others. Signs of this type of Takabbur include:
- Spoiling one's face towards others and turning away from them
- Speaking loudly and arrogantly
- Talking and talking without listening
- Walking with a swagger
- Being unwilling to accept criticism from others
- Insisting on one's opinion, even if it's wrong
- Overusing the words "I" and "me"
- Not responding to a plea for help from the less fortunate

- Demanding special respect from others
- Considering others to be worthless
- Not wanted to engage in menial tasks and expecting others to perform them

Causes of Takabbur

One of the primary causes of Takabbur is *Ujb*, or being impressed with one's wealth, knowledge, power, position, beauty, or family ties and giving credit to oneself for these things instead of seeing them as blessings and trusts of Allah.

Another cause of Takabbur can be an inferiority complex and lack of self-esteem. Imam As-Sadiq (a) said, "Anyone who feels or acts in an arrogant way towards others does so because of a feeling of lowliness."

Yet another cause of Takabbur can be *Hasad*, or jealousy in the meaning of unhappiness with blessings that have been given to someone else with a desire that those blessings be taken away from them. That unhappiness can lead one to compare what he has with the *Mahsood* (the one whom he's jealous of) and to pride himself over those things that he possesses but the Mahsood does not.

Consequences of Takabbur

There are many verses of the Qur'an and traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (a) that condemn Takabbur. Some of the consequences of Takabbur are:
- It is considered to be the greatest of sins, and one who has even a speck of it in his heart will not enter heaven
- It is the ugliest of spiritual defects and the ornament of Iblis
- There is a special valley in hell reserved for those who are arrogant that is hotter than the rest of hell and is a source for its fire. Imam as-Sadiq (a) said that once, this valley complained to Allah about the intensity of its heat. Allah permitted it to breathe, and so it drew a breath which lit the rest of hell on fire. (Al-Kafi v. 2 p. 311)
- It attracts abuse and hostility of others

Treating the Disease

1. Carefully monitor your actions and in particular the way you treat others. This will help you understand the extent to which Takabbur influences the

way you view others and treat them.

2. Remember where you came from and what you will become. Imam Ali (a) said, “I am in wonder at the arrogant one who yesterday was a drop of seminal fluid and will tomorrow be a corpse.” All the things that can be a cause of Takabbur, such as wealth, good looks, and prestige, can be wiped away with sickness, a turn of events, and/or ultimately death. Everyone from the past who was ever famous for such matters was eventually separated from them. What matters for our real life is not such worldly things but rather the provisions we have prepared for the hereafter in the form of good deeds and taqwa.

3. Be in the remembrance of Allah and acknowledge that all blessings come from Him. He is the only one who is truly Kabeer (the Best of Allah in a way that none can be compared to Him). Anyone who does Takabbur is battling Allah and claiming for himself / herself what belongs to Allah.

4. Reflect upon the likes of the Pharaoh (Fir’awn), Qaroon, Nimrud, Saddam Hussein, Joseph Stalin, Ariel Sharon, and others, and what end they met after a live of arrogance.

5. For the sake of Allah (not just to put on a show), make a point to act humbly to those one feel arrogant towards. This can involve being the first to say salaam, endeavoring to serve them, and making dua for them.

6. When someone identifies a flaw you possess, accept this as constructive criticism and endeavor to rid yourself of it. Most people are unhappy when they hear criticism because it wounds their ego. But a believer sees such criticism as an opportunity. If what the other person is saying is false, it is an opportunity to seek forgiveness for him / her. And if it is true, it is an opportunity to move towards perfection.

Similarly, if someone fails to show special respect to you, don’t be overly sensitive and feel entitled to such respect. Try to make excuses for him / her if appropriate. For example, perhaps that person was preoccupied with something troubling matter. Of course, when that person’s treatment becomes disrespectful, it may be necessary to do *amr bil ma’roof* and *nahy anil munkar* and in some cases, others may need to be involved.

Once, there was a racist Arab who wished to insult Salman al-Farisi al-Muhammadi, who was Persian in origin. He asked him, "Which is better, your beard, or the tail of a dog?" Salman responded thoughtfully, "If I am able to successfully cross the Path [over hell and into heaven], then this beard is better. But if I fall in, the tail of the dog is better." His response demonstrates how he had control over his Ghadab and was able to avoid being provoked into demonstrating Takabbur.

Questions for Review

1. Is Takabbur a disease of the heart or a type of outward behavior?

2. Read over the events that took place when the Prophet (s) left Madinah in the month of Ramadhan to march towards Makkah (http://www.al-islam.org/the-message-ayatullah-jafar-subhani/chapter-48-conquest-makkah#prophet-and-muslims-march-towards-makkah). What type of Takabbur did some of the companions of the Prophet (s) demonstrate?

3. According to the verses mentioned above describing the story of Iblis, what spiritual diseases did he possess?

4. Apply what you have learned by:
a) Analyzing quotes from famous people that show apparent or subtle arrogance
b) Studying examples of body language that show arrogance
c) Coming up with real-life scenarios of interpersonal conflict where you can demonstrate the difference between an Islamic approach vs. an arrogant approach

Lesson 10

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Spiritual Disease of Ujb (Being Impressed with the Self)

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what Ujb is, its opposite, and how getting rid of Ujb does not mean one should feel worthless
2- List different types of Ujb and some of the negative spiritual and social consequences ofUjb
3- Give some practical ways of being able to avoid Ujb

Definition

Ujb is to you see yourself, a quality, skill, or possession that you have, and to be impressed by it and see it independent of Allah.

The opposite of Ujb is to acknowledge that everything we have is from Allah, and to praise Him for it, not ourselves. It is not to feel worthless and deny the blessings that we have been given. It is not to stop trying to achieve success. Rather, the example we have been given of the best of the people, who are the prophets and the Imams (a), is that of people who always tried to gain more but acknowledged that their success belongs to Allah. Regarding Nabi Dawud (a) and Nabi Sulayman (a), who were chosen by Allah to lead great kingdoms, Allah says,

> Certainly We gave David and Solomon knowledge, and they said, 'All praise belongs to Allah, who granted us an advantage over many of His faithful servants.' Solomon inherited from David, and he said, 'O people! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given out of everything. Indeed this is a manifest advantage.' (An-Naml, 15-16)

Allah gives us the example of Qaroon, who was someone who was infected with the disease of Ujb. Qaroon had amassed great amounts of wealth and oppressed his people. When asked to share his wealth with others, he responded saying that, "I have acquired this amount on account of my knowledge." Rather than attributing his success and his accomplishments to

the grace and mercy of Allah, he took credit for it himself, and he was impressed with himself. “The reason why I’ve been given this (wealth) is due to the knowledge I possess” (28:78): This is the answer Qaroon gives to the people who tell him he should a) give to others even though they might not have done something to earn it and b) not use his wealth to spread corruption.

Analysis of Qaroon’s words:
1- Qaroon doesn’t attribute the acquisition of wealth to Allah.
2- His justification for being able to do what he wants with the wealth is the fact that he earned it because of his own knowledge.

Harms of Ujb

Ujb is a spiritual disease that can breed other spiritual diseases, including:
1) Takabbur (Arrogance): When we take credit for our own successes, we start to feel the need to compare ourselves to others. If in some area we have been blessed more than the other person (whether it be true or imagined), we see our superiority as being justification for thinking and acting arrogantly towards that person.

2) Loneliness and unhappiness: When we see ourselves as better than others, we don’t consider others as being suitable company. We see others faults and feel unhappy in their presence, but we also feel unhappy because of the loneliness. Imam Ali (a) said, “There is no loneliness more fearful than [what results from] Ujb.”

3) Stunted growth: If we are impressed with ourselves as we are right now and see ourselves as better than others, we won’t have motivation to refine our akhlaaq, perform more ibadah, and gain more knowledge. Instead, one who has Ujb will think to himself / herself, “I’m good the way I am!” Being thankful to Allah for the successes He has given us is commendable, but they should compel us to ask Him to complete and perfect His blessings upon us, not to stay were we’re at.

4) Wasting away one’s good deeds: Ujb, when left untreated, will ultimately destroy the positive effects of good deeds. Imam as-Sadiq (a) illustrates this point with an example:

> Two men a masjid, one who is a worshipper of Allah and the other a

sinner.

> But when they leave, the sinner can be one of the truthful elite yet the worshipper has become a sinner. This is because in the masjid, the worshipper was thinking over his worship and feeling proud over it, while the sinner was in thought of regret over his past sins, and so he sought forgiveness. (Ilal ash-Sharaai', p. 354)

Imam Ali (a) said, "An evil deed that makes you unhappy is better in Allah's eyes than a good deed that you are impressed with." Note: This hadith is not to be taken literally - is not a justification to commit evil deeds and feel unhappy over them. Rather it is a manner of speaking that conveys a stern warning regarding the severe effects of being impressed with one's good deeds independent of Allah.

5) Narcissism: Narcissism is to have excessive interest in oneself and one's appearance. Narcissism often goes hand-in-hand with Ujb.

6) Self-promotion and showing off: It is natural for those who are impressed with themselves to want others to see them and be impressed in a similar way. Therefore they will make it a point to brag about their accomplishments to others by talking about them and using social media to advertise them. This can take place with something as simple as a selfie taken in a particular pose and posted with the intention of self promotion and showing off.

Types of Ujb and their Treatment

Ujb can be categorized according to what aspect of the self one is impressed with:

1- Ujb with regards to one's physical appearance: This can be treated by pondering upon one's spiritual sicknesses, and the eventual decay and rotting that will take place with one's physical body.

2- Ujb with regards to one's strength: This can be treated by understanding that a simple fever caused by a tiny particle can cause one to be bedridden and unable to move, or that a tiny weak creature such as a mosquito can be the cause of one's death.

3- Ujb with regards to one's intelligence: This can be treated by understanding

that our ability to think is provided by Allah, and that the slightest sickness can cause someone to lose his/her rational capabilities. We should also not consider our opinion to always be correct and insist on others accepting what we say. We should rather insist on the truth and be willing to consider other opinions.

4- Ujb with regards to one's family and lineage: This can be treated by understanding that if one's character and behavior is contrary to the noble characteristics of his/her family, just being related in blood does not have value. Allah says to Nabi Nuh (a) regarding his son, "O Noah! Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [the personification of] unrighteous conduct…" (Nooh 11:46). This is because the son of Nuh (a) disobeyed his father and did not recognize him as the righteous prophet of Allah, and was drowned as a result.

5- Ujb regarding one's wealth: This can be treated by realizing one's wealth is capable of being taken away and is just a temporary trust from Allah that one will be questioned about.

As a general treatment, the Ahlul Bayt (a) have instructed us to:
a) Be in the remembrance of Allah and to attribute all goodness and perfection to Him

b) To avoid comparing ourselves with others for purposes which are not beneficial. For example, seeing our spiritual deficiencies in the light of another's spiritual perfection is beneficial, because it can motivate us to work harder to avoid *haraam,* perform our *wajibaat*, and seek knowledge to worship Allah better in order to attain the same perfection. But feeling proud over one's physical superiority can be destructive.

c) When seeing others, one can sometimes think, "I'm better than he/she." This thought should be combatted with the thought of "He/she is better than I." There are many reasons for being able to think as such, including:
- The other person may have hidden merits that he cannot see
- If right now that person is an open sinner, in the future, he may reform and become one of the *awliyaa* of Allah
- That person may be judged by Allah with different expectations and may have a better final outcome as a result

Questions for Review

1- What are some ways that social media breeds Ujb and narcissism?

2- How can Ujb cause one's good deeds to be wasted away?

3- Let's say that you achieve better results than others on an exam or in a competition, and that you receive public acknowledgment for your accomplishments. How can you avoid feeling Ujb despite your achievements?

4- Why does the statement of Nabi Dawud (a) and Nabi Sulayman (a) quoted from the Qur'an above not reflect Ujb?

Lesson 11

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

Spiritual Disease of Ya's: Despair

Learning Objectives:
1- Explain what Ya's is and its three different categories
2- Understand the severity of Ya's and its consequences
3- Give some practical ways of being able to avoid Ya's

Definition of Ya's

Ya's means despair or hopelessness. It is a state of the heart that can be experienced in different circumstances in life, including
a) When you feel deprived of something that you really desire and you can't bear it anymore
b) When you are facing difficult trials and you feel that you are at a dead-end
c) When you have committed sins and you feel that Allah will not forgive you

Ya's is a spiritual disease that can lead to serious physical, psychological, and spiritual consequences. According to the Ahlul Bayt (a), Ya's is a major sin. It is important to be able to be aware of the severity of Ya's and how to treat it.

Ya's in the Qur'an

Allah says, "…And do not despair of Allah's *rawh* (mercy). Indeed no one despairs of Allah's *rawh* except the *kafireen* (faithless)." (Yusuf 12:87).

Rawh in Arabic originally refers to a pleasant breeze that brings comfort and pleasure. In this context it refers to comfort in times of difficulty and mercy in times where one fears punishment.

The reason why Ya's is attributed to the *kafireen* is because it stems from *kufr* or a lack of belief and/or acceptance of Allah's Knowledge, Power, Mercy, and/or Wisdom. When we acknowledge and believe that Allah is
- Completely aware of our situation (Al-Aleem)
- Capable of doing whatever He pleases (Al-Qadeer)

- Wanting to grant us His mercy (Ar-Raheem, al-Wadood)
- Committed to acting according to wisdom (Al-Hakeem)
there should never be a cause for despairing of His *rawh.*

Importance of Having Hope

For most people, life will have twists and turns and ups and downs. For one who lacks the worldview of a believer, such changes and challenges will be difficult to bear, and they will often lead to consequences such as depression and relying on drugs or alcohol. In extreme cases, they can even compel someone to commit suicide. (Note to Teacher: Prompt students to explore the connection between a secular worldview and not being able to deal with changes and challenges of life. This was covered in the Aqaid section of this class.)

Those who have *imaan*, on the other hand, embrace change and difficulties. They recognizes that worldly life is a meant to be a test and an opportunity to deepen their *imaan.* They are concerned with performing their responsibilities to Allah (swt) and they trust that He will always do what lies in the best interest.

Treating Ya's

Practical solutions for treating Ya's depend on the source of the Ya's:

Ya's in Worldly Matters

This type of hopelessness is when you long for something from the dunya that you don't possess.

1- Know that the granting your request lies within the capability of Allah, Al-Qadeer, whose Power is unlimited and extends over the entire universe. Every moment, Allah displays His magnificent power is our own body and the world around us. Whatever our request is pales in comparison to the display of Power we can observe all around us. (Note to teacher: Prompt student for examples of displays of His magnificent Power in the world around us.)

2- There have been many others in the past who have longed for something but by not losing hope in Allah's mercy, they have eventually been granted

their desire. Reading over the stories of the Prophets from the Qur'an and reflecting on how their wishes were granted - sometimes after a long delay - can be a source of great hope and inspiration. Examples include the stories of Nabi Ibrahim (a) and Nabi Zakariyya (a) who were granted children in their elder years.

3- Allah loves to hear the du'a of a mu'min. Imam al-Baqir (a) used to say, "Sometimes, a believer with ask Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill his need, but Allah will delay granting it, because He loves to hear his voice [in supplication] and to listen to his tearful pleas." (Al-Kafi v. 2 p. 488). This delay can be a source of great spiritual growth and proximity to Allah.

4- In some cases, not having this request granted may be better that if it were granted. Allah says, "…It may be that you dislike something while it is good for you, and it may be that you love something while it is bad for you, and Allah knows and you do not know." (al-Baqarah 2:216).

Example #1: See the story of Tha'alabah b. Haatib - http://www.al-islam.org/anecdotes-reflection-part-1-sayyid-ali-akbar-sadaaqat/16-stinginess#4-zakaat-tha'labah-ansaari-not-accepted.

Example #2: Abu Baseer was one of the great companions of Imam al-Baqir (a) and Imam as-Sadiq (a). He When he first met Imam al-Baqir (a), Imam al-Baqir commanded him to draw near. He wiped his hand over his face and eyes, and suddenly Abu Baseer could see. Imam al-Baqir (a) then asked him, "Do you wish to remain as such and be rewarded and punished as others will be rewarded and punished on the Day of Judgment? Or do you wish to return to your previous state and thereby be given the Paradise purely [without any punishment]?" Abu Baseer said, "I wish to return to the way I was before." He (a) wiped his eyes once more and his eyesight was gone.

Ya's in Times of Difficulty

1- Remember that this world is not the final mode of existence. Rather it was created as a place for test and trial. Those who don't have faith in there being a Rabb who governs the universe become hopeless and negative when trial descends. But for believers, they see trials from two perspectives: one is the hardship itself, which has its own difficulties and may cause tears and sadness. The other is the One who is behind every event that transpires in this

world. They know that He does things on the basis of justice, mercy, and wisdom. With this knowledge, despite the difficulty they also feel ease: “with difficulty there is ease" (Ash-Sharh 94:5 and 6).

2- See the trial as an opportunity to
a) *Turn to Allah in dua*: Express your need to Allah and to beg Him to replace your misery with His comfort
b) *Be Thankful*: Appreciate all the blessings you already have and to redouble your thanks to Allah for those blessings.
c) *Self-Reform*: Reflect on yourself and see what sort of shortcomings you may have. Perhaps the reason for the test is to give you the opportunity to find these shortcomings and actively work at addressing them. Having a shortcoming is different than blaming yourself for the trial and saying, “What did I do wrong?”

3- Be patient with Allah's will and secure in His knowledge of what's best, while still expressing your true desires to Him and having hope in His deliverance. After all, if you knock on a door long enough, eventually it will open. Ultimately there is a hereafter where all of our requests will be granted.

4- Fight negative thoughts of hopelessness with the remembrance of Allah.

5- Remember those who were tried with even greater trials, such as the Ahlul Bayt (a), and the martyrs and prisoners of Karbala. Reflect on their patience and how they used these trials as a source of spiritual growth.

Ya’s Due to Past Sins that are Committed

As long as we are alive, the door of repentance is always open. Allah commands the Prophet (s) as follows:

> Say [that Allah declares,] “O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the
> mercy of Allah! Indeed Allah will forgive all sins. Indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.” (Az-Zumar 39:53)

Questioning Allah’s ability to forgive our past sins, no matter how great, is a sign of not believing that Allah is al-Ghaffar, al-Ghufoor, and at-Tawwab (the All-Forgiving), as well as Arham ar-Raahimeen (the most Merciful of those who show mercy). Allah says, “Indeed I am all-forgiving toward he who

repents, becomes faithful and acts righteously, and then follows guidance." (Taha 20:82). If this feeling of hopelessness settles in, it is a worse sin than all of our past sins combined!

Believing in the all-encompassing mercy of Allah does not mean that one should be bold enough to commit sins and then expect that Allah will forgive him. This is because after committing the sin,
a) you may not have enough time to live in order to repent OR
b) you may not have the motivation to repent

The desire to seek Allah's forgiveness is itself a sign of Allah's mercy.

The guilt we feel after committing sins is also a sign of Allah's mercy that is meant to encourage us to repent. It should not be used an excuse to say to ourselves, "I'm doomed for hell anyway, so I might as well commit more sins!" There have been many great sinners of the past who have been forgiven. Examples include:

- The Magicians of Fir'awn, who stood against the Prophet of their time for the purpose of gaining favor with the Pharaoh. Yet when they realized that Nabi Musa (a) and Haroon (a) were truthful, they became believers and sacrificed their lives for their beliefs.

- Hurr, who was partially responsible for Imam Husayn (a) and his companions being isolated in Karbala and who was a leader in the army that was meant to fight the Imam of the time. But yet, when he repented, Imam Husayn (a) immediately informed him that Allah had forgiven him.

- Fudayl b. 'Ayyad: See http://www.al-islam.org/manifestations-all-merciful-abu-muhammad-zaynul-abidin/o-allāh-reform-every-uneven-affair-muslims

Avoiding Depressive States

It is natural to have ups and downs because of the nature of this world. But being sad and experiencing depressives states for an extended amount of time is not normal. Sometimes, the cause of such states is a medical problem that needs to be treated by medical experts. But in many cases, these sad states can be treated through a few simple but important techniques:

- *The Cure of Tawheed*: Learning about the position of Allah as our Rabb and His other attributes, and remembering Him constantly in this capacity.

- *Regular exercise*: Daily exercise is very important to keep healthy. It can also help to feel positive and to promote self-esteem.

- *Diet:* Eating a healthy and balanced diet can also help to feel positive. In the modern era, many medical studies have been performed that suggest a link between diet and depression. Conversely, a good diet can help promote feeling positive.

- *Halal entertainment*: According to the Ahlul Bayt (a), having a portion of our day enjoying ourselves in a *halal* manner without going to the extremes can be a source of gaining energy that will help us in other aspects of our life.

- *Sleep*: Having a regular bedtime and getting an adequate amount of rest on a nightly basis is also important in maintaining psychological health. It has been said that the sleep that one experiences before midnight is twice as effective as sleep experienced after midnight.

- *Company*: Surrounding yourself with people who are positive, loving, and encouraging is essential in order to keep feeling positive.

- *Avoiding haram and Performing wajibaat*: Having a real commitment in practice to the shari'ah causes our *iman* to flourish and results in what the Qur'an refers to as the pure life:

> Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive
> him with a good life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do. (An-Nahl 16:97)

On the other hand, turning away from Allah can result in a dismal quality of life:

> But whoever disregards My remembrance, his shall be a wretched life, and on
> the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind." (Taha 20:124)

Questions:

1. Review the Qur'anic story of Nabi Zakariyya (a) (Aal Imraan 3:38-41 and Maryam 19:2-15) and explain the relevance of Ya's and Rawh to this story.

2. Look up the story of the repentance of Hurr in http://www.al-islam.org/lohoof-sighs-sorrow-sayyid-ibn-tawus and explain its relevance to the topic of Ya's.

3. Review the Qur'anic story of the magicians of Firawn (Surah ash-Shu'araa 26:34-51) and explain its relevance to the topic of Ya's.

4. What is the "Cure of Tawheed"? How can remembering Allah as the Rabb and with His other attributes help in dealing with sad states?

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 12

Life Skills- Introductory Activities

	Class Life Skills	**Date**
Lesson **Introductory Activities**	**Subject** Theology	**Period** 1
	Textbook Reference Page X	**Length Of time** 60 minutes

Rationale

Students will be introduced to the objectives of the program and will be given outline to put the course into context

Students will learn that being a good active Muslim is a holistic activity that requires effort and time.

Outcomes (include any outcomes which is presumed to have been covered in the course earlier and will be linked or referred to in this lesson)

Outcomes to be covered in this lesson

1. **Students should understand the major problems of the world**
2. **Students should understand The different facets of Islam to tackle all world problems**
3. **Students should know that Islam is a Practical religion**
4. **Students will learn a critical life skill of brainstorming**

Preparation and Planning

- Powerpoint Document containing presentation
- Post it notes and pens
- Large format paper (A3) and sharpies

Assessment Tasks

Select one problem form yourself and investigate how Islam can help you solve that problem.

Follow –up Activity (Homework Instructions, collecting work, guidelines for next lesson)

Optional:
Listen to Lesson on parents https://youtu.be/1oDMl4mFVf4

Lesson Sequence (Strategies, procedures, tasks, etc) **Teacher Activity**	**Student Activity**	**Est Time**
Settle Students down and sit them in groups of 5 (or as appropriate)	Moving desks and chairs to sit in groups	5 min
Teacher hands out A3 sheets of paper to each inidividual and provides the following instructions Today we are going to do a brainstorming activity to identify the big problems of the world from your perspective. We'll use this as a jumping off point for the theme for the rest of the year. a.Draw a circle and label ME –list of problems or things you'd like change in your own personal world or in your self (teacher to give a few examples) b. Draw larger COMMUNITY circle –list problems you perceive in the community you are part of. What things would you like to change in the IHIC community? ii.What problems are families in our shia facing? c.Draw larger NATION circle –what do you think are the most important problems we face as a country? d.Finally, think about the great problems you believe are facing the people of the WORLD. Write these around the outer circle.10 min to brainstorm problems –You are not tied to these topics—brainstorming activity to get some ideas flowing. If you are having a hard time thinking of problems in our community, the nation, or world –local newspapers, national, international newspapers	Students listen to teachers instructions Student follow instructions an brainstorm-	2 min 10 min 5min
NOW share your notes with your neighbour and group and add to your list (Teachers moving around and assisting students and ensuring students on task)	Students converse with their colleagues	5 min
Teacher then makes 4 columns (me/community/nation/ world) on the board and asks students to get up and put the most common problems on the board. Teacher then opens up discussion on how Islam can solve all these problems – Select 2 problems from each section to discuss	Students put the information on the main white board.	10 Min 10 Min

Teacher then makes connection between knowing Islam (acquiring critical skills) and solving problems of the world/community/nation/self on a prepared PowerPoint slides with the emphasis that Islam is a PRACTICAL religion. Why Shia are dangerous! Watch video -https://youtu.be/urn5zmLRqtU and fill out work sheet Teacher to conclude lesson to summerise main objectives of the lesson and life skills program.	Students contribute based on their knowledge Students listen Students listen to video and fill out worksheet	10min

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 13

Life Skills- 2 How to be a Student

	Class Life Skills	**Date**
Lesson **How to be a student**	**Subject** Theology	**Period** 1
	Textbook Reference Page X	**Length Of time** 60 minutes

Rationale

Students will be introduced to the importance of education in Islam.

Students will learn how to become a good student according to the teachings of Islam.

Outcomes (include any outcomes which is presumed to have been covered in the course earlier and will be linked or referred to in this lesson)

Outcomes to be covered in this lesson

1. Students should know the key characteristics of a good learner/student according to Islam.
2. Students should understand the importance of learning for solving contemporary problems in the world
3. Students should know that Islam is the solution to major world problems.
4. Students should put Islamic ethics before doing any research.
5. Students should now the Islamic etiquettes of using electronic devices.

Preparation and Planning

- Whiteboard and markers
- Post it notes and pens
- Large format paper (A3) and sharpies
- Prepare for the lesson (main reference: https://www.al-islam.org/guiding-youth-new-generation-murtadha-mutahhari)

Assessment Tasks

Select one contemporary issue that requires research and discuss key steps need to be done before analysing the topic.

Follow –up Activity (Homework Instructions, collecting work, guidelines for next lesson)

Optional:
Think about an important issue currently facing teenagers and youth in Australia.

Lesson Sequence (Strategies, procedures, tasks, etc) **Teacher Activity**	**Student Activity**	**Est Time**
Settle Students down and sit them in groups of 3	Moving desks and chairs to sit in groups	5 min
Teacher hands out A3 sheets of paper to each inidividual and provides the following instructions Today we are going to do a brainstorming activity to select one issue (among the list of problems identified in the previous session) that requires a thorough research. 1. Make a list of issues, select one and write down some points about why this issue requires research 2. Outline key ethical principles need to be followed before starting to research and mention one pitfall for each principle and then how to overcome it.	Students listen to teachers instructions Student follow instructions and brainstorm Students converse with their colleagues Students put the information on the A3 sheets Students contribute based on their knowledge	5 min 15 min
One person from each group shares the findings to all groups. Teacher then opens up discussion on how Islam can help a researcher to find an answer. Share some points about the significance of knowledge: https://www.al-islam.org/es/node/31140 Each group again brainstorms the key points learnt today and one person shares it with everyone	Students listen One person from each group explains the findings	10 min 10 min 10 min
preparation for next week: - Some etiquettes of using devices - bring your own device to do a research project in the class next week	The teacher opens up the discussion All students participate in the group discussions Then one person share the lessons learnt.	5 min

	Students to remember to bring their electronic device next week	

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 14

Life Skills- 3 Research Skills 2

Life Skill Lesson 3: How to be a student / Research Skills

Work in groups of 2-4 and answer the following questions

Student Names:

1. ……
2. ……
3. ……
4. ……

Teacher Names:

1.
2.
3.

Please answer the following Questions:

1- In one sentence, CLEARLY explain the issue you agreed on in your group last week.

……

……

Show the above answer to your teacher, then answer the following questions:

2- Do you think this issue is affecting you or many youth in your generation? What about next generation?

……

……

3- Do you think the following hadith is only addressing prophets, Imams and scholars or including all of us? Why?

كُلُّكُمْ رَّاعٍ وَ كُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you is responsible for his flock."

……

……

……

4- What are the possible consequences of not finding correct Islamic answers to your issue?

1) ……
2) ……
3) ……
4) ……

5- Outline ways that you can find correct Islamic answers to your issue.

1) ……
2) ……
3) ……
4) ……
5) ……
6) ……

Show the above answer to your teacher, then answer the following questions:

6- As a Muslim who has access to Islamic resources, how likely is for you to find correct solutions for your issue?

……

……

7- As a Muslim who believes in Allah, prophets and Imams, how likely is for you to practise the solutions you are going to find?

……

……

8- Do you really believe that Islam has the best solutions to the contemporary world problems including the issue you raised here? Why? Please answer this question honestly.

……

……

……

……

……

Show the above answer to your teacher, then answer the following questions:

9- When searching for truth, how important is sincerity?

……

……

……

10- What are some Islamic etiquettes when asking question about your issue above from a scholar or a teacher?

1) ……
2) ……
3) ……
4) ……

11- What are some Islamic etiquettes when debating about this issue with your friends or your family?

1) ……
2) ……
3) ……
4) ……

12- What are some Islamic etiquettes when discussing your issue with non-Mahrams?

1) ……

2) ……

3) ……

4) ……

Show the above answer to your teacher, then answer the following questions:

13- Mention two websites of each type below that you can use to find solutions for your issue?

Shia websites: 1) …….. 2)

……

Sunni websites: 1) …….. 2)

……

Non-Religious websites: 1) …….. 2)

……

Show the above answer to your teacher, then answer the following questions:

14- Search your question in the internet (using Islamic Resources) and provide three possible solutions to your issue?

1) ……

……

2) ……

……

3) ……

……

15- Search your question in the internet (using non-religious resources) and provide three possible solutions to your issue?

1) ……

……

2) ……

……

3) ……

……

Grade 11

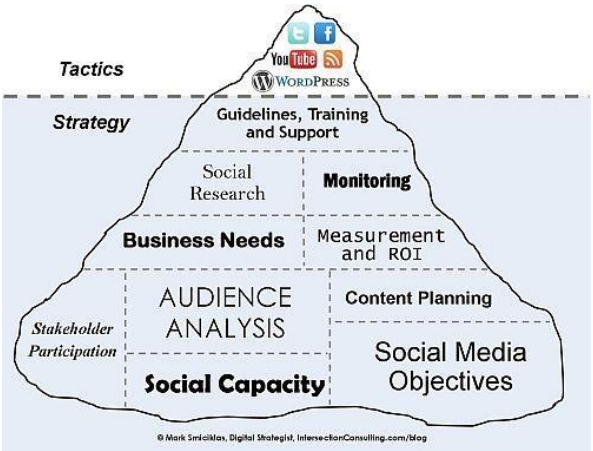
Stream: Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 15-16

Life Skills- 4 and 5 Strategic Thinking

STRATEGIC THINKING

Strategic leadership doesn't come easily in most organizations. Statistics show that fewer than 10% of leaders exhibit strategic skills, a woefully inadequate number considering the demands on organizations today. Strategic skills aren't needed only in times of growth. During tough times, when resources are tight, it is even more important to ensure those resources are focused in the right areas.



Leaders throughout organizations face tremendous pressures to make short-term numbers and show immediate wins. Operational leadership rules the day. This can lead to a lack of focus–as one executive recently put it, "We're running fast in many different directions." Additionally, leaders who excel at meeting short-term targets and solving functional problems may feel paralysed and unsure when the challenges in front of them are far reaching and complex–a situation we've seen consistently in these recession years.

WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا ۚ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بِيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَٰلِكَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

- "Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colours? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colours similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving." (Al-Faatir: 27-28)

Planning in Hadith

- Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "…Each day perform the work of that day, for to each belongs what is proper to it…Beware of hurrying to (accomplish) affairs before their (proper) time, of neglecting them when they are possible, of stubborn persistence in them when they are impossible and of weakness in them when they have become clear. So put everything in its place and perform every action in its time."26
- Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to the chiefs [collectors] of land tax: "Beware of postponing works and pushing away goodness, for there is repentance in it."27
- Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another's field."28

- Imam (as) says: 'The sign of being rational is thinking' because if you just say what you hear or what you read, if you just make decisions as soon as something comes to your mind or is suggested by other people, this means something is missing, there is a gap here. Rational people are the people that no one can trigger them, no one can just stimulate them or excite them or make them angry or provoke them and get what they want from them. Rational people are the people who are in control of their emotions, they take their time, they collect data, they ask different people for opinion, they consult, then they take time, they see it one day, maybe one month, it depends on the question, then they make their decision, you cannot just do things quickly.
- Then Imam Kadhim (as) says 'For everything, there is a vehicle, there is a way to carry everything to your destination' especially if there is something heavy and you want to carry, how can you move and carry 'aql' forward? 'The vehicle for 'aql' is humility, humbleness. Arrogance doesn't let us think properly because the one who is arrogant has only one aim in mind, to prove that he is right.

ACTIVITY 1- KEY PROBLEM –

Develop a KEY question –In groups of 2/3

If you cant come up with one, imagine this scenario

A private Foundation wants to donate $5 million to a group 'That can innovatively introduce the sublime concepts of Islam to the world'.

STEP 1- Brainstorm – Identify the MAJOR problems facing the propagation of Islam in the next decade.
Prioritise the problems and select the TOP problem.

STEP 2- Brain storm possible research ideas/strategies that will potentially help you solve the problem – Mindmap the ideas in your groups. DO NOT discourage any ideas. ONLY positive thinking. **Identify ONE idea/strategy that is most promising. (ref Lesson1)**

ACTIVITY 2- SAVI OPPORTUNITY CANVAS

SCOPING: 15 min

- What are the KEY FACTS regarding this opportunity (or solution).
- Here outline all the known facts of the problem or solution including your skills etc.
- What do you know about the solution, what is it you may need, who are you targeting etc.

ANALYSING: 15 min

- Do a PMI (Plus Minus Interesting) and OPV on the idea
- Prioritise key points

PMI is a Thinking Tool devised by Edward de Bono (www.edwdebono.com)
Although deceptively simple, this powerful tool is very suitable for groups and for individual work. PMI is flexible according to the time available a useful PMI can be completed in a few minutes, or equally be valuable for a group process taking much longer. It can be used very successfully as a decision making tool for both creative and strategic thinking.

Key Benefits

There are a number of key benefits for using PMI:

- It's easy to learn
- It enables groups to think broadly about an issue.
- It also enables groups to reach informed decisions about difficult Issues
- It enables groups or individuals see both sides of a premise/position
- With OPV (Other Points of View, see below) it allows groups to see things from a different point of view
- Its simplicity makes it easy to explain and communicate the reason decision to others.

How it works

Firstly, you need to identify a subject, a proposition or a question. Examples include:

- A Yes/No Proposition/Question (e.g. 'Our research vessel has been a good investment)
- A review (eg 'How has our laboratory performed in the past 12 months?')
- An analysis of two competing decision options 'Should we invest in offshore or land-based wind energy?'

Plus	Minus	Interesting
- Fill in each column in turn starting with Plus - Frame and repeat questions like "what would be good about …", "and what else?" - Accept All ideas they can be prioritised later - Stay with this column as long as you possibly can. Typically, we find it harder	- Only move onto 'Minus' when you have really finished with the 'Plus' - Again, accept and write up all ideas. It rapidly loses creativity if ideas are criticised as soon as they are raised - Use OPV to help generate More ideas (Mind Map- 'Who has an interest	- Add 'interesting' points whenever they arise - Often they contain really valuable ideas that you can develop further.

to identify plusses then minuses!	here?', 'what might their point of view be?')	

When you have competed the PMI, prioritise the items in each column. There are a number of ways of doing this. Two examples are:

- An individual carrying out a PMI might simply read through all the items and then number the top 5.

- In a group situation there are number of ways of reaching a view about priorities for example, each participant is given a number of coloured dots (usually 5-10) and decides where to put them in each PMI column. When all the dots have been ' placed and counted, the group considers the results. Is the decision clear? Or, Is there more to be done?

ACTIVITY 4- THINKING TOOLS – OPV – OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

OPV is Thinking Tool devised by Edward de Bono (www.edwdebono.com).

The premise of this tool is that we should direct our attention to the views of Specific people, not just views in general. This requires 'stepping into the shoes' of other people involved in a given situation, project, conversation etc.

OPV Steps

1. Firstly, identify who has an interest or point of view. It could be an individual, an organisation an institution, a sector of society, a stakeholder group or even a country. Think widely and come up with a range of possibilities.
2. Pick one and put yourself in their position (step into their shoes). What would be their point of view on this question? What are their interests? What matters to them?
3. Continue until you've analysed all the Other Points of View.
4. if you're using OPV with PMI, ask 'What would they see as being positive about the question?' 'What would they see as being negative...' and '...interesting?' Remember the PMI rules Always start with 'Plus' and only move on to 'Minus' when you cannot think of more 'Plus'. Add interesting points at any time.

VISIONING

This step seeks to achieve clarity around a desired future state in terms others could visualise.

Come up with a SUCCINCT vision statement with the following characteristics

1- Clear
2- Desirable
3- Compelling
4- Emotive
5- Believable

To help use the 'GREAT OUTCOMES" question: 'What would be a great outcome (or outcomes) with respect to the idea or opportunity you are working on- How will be different in the future (10 years)?"

IMPLEMENTING

Getting ideas to action.

1- What- are some of the key actions
2- Who- is involved? Who are the Stakeholders
3- When – What is the time frame, what are the key dates
4- Where- What is the geographical Scope?
5- Why- Why is the opportunity important, what's the need?

Identify at least 2 IMMIDIATE NEXT STEPS.

Grade 11

Stream: Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 17

Life Skills- 6 Listening Skills

LISTENING SKILLS

Listening skills are a fundemental part not only of effective leadership but more importantly for life in gendral! In todays world this skill is increasingly important with the amount of data being shared[1]. Similarly, for scientists, this skill is unfortunaltey not very pravelent or developed[2]. As scientists, its is a very important skill to be able to listen, not only to the community but also to stakeholders, supervisors and others inorder to mitigate conflict but more importanlty to direct and focus resources towrd real problems. Reseach shows that we only remember around 25-50% of what we hear![3]

What does Islam Say?

- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Accustom your ear to listen effectively, and do not listen to anything that will not benefit your progress.'[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 6234]
- Imam Ali (a.s.) said, 'Whoever listens effectively reaps its benefits immediately.'[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 9243]

In this lessonwe will practice the concept of ACTIVE listening by following 5[4] very simple rules,

1. Pay Attention
Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language.

2. Show That You're Listening
Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.

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[1] Wheatley, Margaret. Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world. ReadHowYouWant. com, 2011.
[2] http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/01/be-responsible-researcher-reach-out-and-listen
[3] Bechler, Curt, and Scott D. Johnson. "Leadership and listening: A study of member perceptions." Small Group Research 26.1 (1995): 77-85.
[4] https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm and

- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.

3. Provide Feedback
Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is," and "Sounds like you are saying," are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say." "Is this what you mean?"
- Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.

4. Defer Judgment
Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

5. Respond Appropriately
Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.

- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

ACTIVITY 1- ACTIVE LISTENING

Students are paired of whom 1 will go outside, the other will be in the room. They will both be given a set of instructions. Activity starts when they come into the room.

Intructions for the group outside: They need to talk to their parner about something that is really interesting to them- that they are passionate about- Could be any topic.

Intructions for those inside: They need to use all the listening skills learnt for the first 3 min until the teacher gives the class a secret signal (could be a tap or change of slide) then they need to practice really poor listening skills, (look away, focus on their phone, thumb through pages of a book etc).

After the activity, reactions sought form all students.

ACTIVITY 2- LISTENING SKILLS - PARAPHRASING

Talker has to describe what they want from a holiday but without mentioning a destination. Listener has to practice active listening skills – listening attentively to what is being said and what is not quite being said, and demonstrating their listening to the talker by their behaviour. After 3-4 mins the listener has to summarise the three or four main issues or criteria that they have heard the talker express and then make a tentative sale of a suitable destination. Then one minute to review how close the listener was to what the talker said and needed. Then swap roles and repeat.

Resources:

Powerpoint: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ubHKrI1lxMQHo8IrzbMbrjRxN1e1-GWL?usp=sharing

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 18

Philosophy of Islamic Rules

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Philosophy of Islamic Law (Why is it important for us to learn the laws of Islam?)

Question: Why should I learn about Islamic laws and what are they good for? How committed do I need to be to a) learn them and b) practice them?

- Whenever we are in a situation where a) we don't know where we need to go and b) we don't know how to get to a destination even if we knew what that destination was, intuition dictates that we need a guide.

This is what Imam as-Sajjad (a) refers to when he says: *One who does not have a wise person to guide him will perish.*

- Life is like a snowy land where in all directions there is snow and it's not clear a) where we came from b) where we need to go and c) how to get there. Without guidance, people choose different destinations in life. Some people are after wealth. Others are after fame. Others are obsessed with beauty, the material world, satisfying their low desires, and other various sorts of goals.

All of these goals and other worldly goals, if pursued for themselves and not for Allah, will lead someone to certain destruction. Intuition dictates that we need to be guided in life as to a) what is the goal of life and b) how to get there.

- The teachings from our Creator that tell us where we came from, what our goal is and how to get there is called **Islam**. That's why Islam is a way of life.

- Once we understand what our destination is (return to Allah), we need to learn how to get there. The way to get to our destination is called the Shariah (the laws of Islam). Following the laws of Islam is following a path towards Allah.

- Every law in Islam is there for a reason and it helps us towards getting to our goal. There is no law in Islam which is "just because." Once a companion asked Imam Ridha (a), "Some people say that the haraam and halal have no purpose behind them." The Imam responds, "They have gone very far from the truth! We see that the servants of Allah are in need of staying away from haraam

because those things that are haraam invite one towards corruption and annihilation."

Question: Why are there so many laws in Islam?

Answer:
1) Learning how to ride a bicycle is fairly simple. There are not too many rules you have to follow, and even young children can learn how to bike. On the other hand, learning how to fly an airplane is quite complicated. You have to go to a special school and there are a lot of rules you have to follow. However, those rules have a purpose. Let's say you wanted to travel a long distance, say from Toronto to Timbuktu. Going there by bike would be impossible or at least very difficult. But by airplane, it would be a day's journey.

Similarly, any time we wish to achieve a high goal, the more rules the better. In our case, we want to reach the highest of goals, which is perfection. Each rule that Allah gives us is an opportunity to reach this perfection.

2) Each law, when practiced with the proper mindset and attention, is an opportunity for us to remember Allah. For example, there are rules and guidelines in Islam for how to enter a room, how to sit and stand, how to greet each other, eat food, and travel. Whenever we follow these rules it is an opportunity to spend our day in remembrance of Allah.

3) It's true that there are many laws in Islam, but still, as reported in Nahj al-Balagha, Imam Ali (a) tells us that what has been made prohibited for us is much less than what is allowed for us. Take for example the grape tree. From this tree we get grapes, vinegar, grape juice, wine, raisins, grape seeds, grape seed oil, wood from a grape tree, grape leaves, ash from grape tree wood, syrup / extract, etc. Of all these things, only wine is haraam and the rest is halal.

4) Compared to some of the previous religions, Islam is actually easier.

Question: What is the reason behind Islamic laws? For example, why is pork haram, why is salah wajib, and why do we have to respect our parents?

Answer: When it comes to looking at the reason behind Islamic law (meaning

the answer to the question, why?) there are two "reasons":
1) Illah or Daleel (علة, دليل) which means the "proof" or evidence behind the Islamic law. Islamic law is derived from three sources: the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt, and the intellect (the aql). The proof tells us where in the Qur'an, Sunnah, or logic does it say that this is a law.

Example: Hajj is waajib once in a lifetime as soon as one is baaligh and able to go.

Why is it waajib? In the Qur'an, 3:97, Allah says, "And it is the duty of mankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House for those who can afford the journey to it." Based on this verse and other evidence we know that Hajj is waajib as has been stated.

2) Hikmah, Falsafah (حكمة, فلسفة) which means the philosophy behind the law - how does this law help us or prevent harm from reaching us?

Why do we have to pray? In the Qur'an, 29:45, Allah says, "Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah is surely greater."

From this verse we understand three points of wisdom behind salah (why we have to pray):
1) Praying prevents indecencies
2) Praying prevents sin
3) Praying can help us remember Allah

In verse 64:16 Allah gives us the wisdom behind the obligation of giving charity. He says, "spend in the way of Allah; that is better for yourselves. Those who are saved from their own greed - it is they who are the successful / prosperous."

From this verse we understand that the hikmah behind giving charity is that doing so
a) saves us from our own greed and miserliness (shuhh)
b) makes us successful

Mujtahids examine the evidence behind Islamic laws when performing ijtihad. Scholars also seek out the hikmah behind laws in the teachings of the Ahl al-

Bayt. For example, Shaykh as-Sadooq (r.a.), one of the greatest Shi'a scholars of all times, wrote a two volume work called Ilal al-Sharaa'i in which he compiled the wisdom behind many of our Islamic laws.

What are the differences between the wisdom behind a law, and the proof behind a law?

a) We have to know the proof behind a law, but it is not necessary to know the wisdom behind a law. (It can be super helpful but not necessary). Imam Ali (a) tells us that sometimes the wisdom is hidden from us on purpose as a test for us.

b) We sometimes can guess at the wisdom behind a law, without saying for sure that this is the reason behind it, but we can never guess at the proof behind a law - we need solid evidence for that.

Question: Sometimes, Muslims who aren't used to an Islamic lifestyle take a partial approach towards Islamic law. They follow part of it but reject the other part of it. For example, they follow the laws their family follows but not those that their family doesn't follow. Or they follow the laws they find easy, but leave aside those that they find difficult. Or, they do their wajibaat, but don't stay away from things which are haraam. Why is it important for someone to follow the Law completely and not just partially?

Answer:
a) Islam means submission which means that we, as slaves of Allah, look to Him for instruction and we obey. One who picks and chooses is not submitting to Allah; they are setting up another master alongside Allah which is a form of shirk. That other master is the idol of the self. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Let me inform you of the one who has taken his own opinion as his god" (25:43 and 45:23).

b) Allah wants us to worship Him the way that He wants us to worship Him, not the way we want to worship Him. Once, Iblis told Allah, "Pardon me from doing sujood to Adam! Instead, I will worship You in a way that none of the exalted angels or messengers have worshipped You! Allah, the Exalted, replied, "I have no need of your worship. I wish to be worshipped only the way that I want, not the way that you want."

c) When trying to reach a goal where we are not familiar with the path to that goal, we need to follow the instructions carefully, or else we might perish along the way. For example, there are lava fields in various parts of the world that have hiking trails. Going off the trail is very dangerous because you could easily be burnt with erupting steam or injured by inhaling toxic gas.

Questions for Review

1- Based on what we discussed in class, what is the connection between following Allah's law and treating one's self (soul)?

2- Look up verse 23 of Surah al-Israa (17). What rule does this verse refer to? Does it state the hikmah for this rule or the evidence for the rule? Why?

3- In a hadith, Imam Ali (a) is reported to have said, "Begin [your meal] with salt and end with salt, for in doing so is a cure from 27 diseases." Does this hadith indicate a rule? Does it state the hikmah for this rule or the evidence for the rule? Why?

4- Explain this statement, "Allah wishes that we worship Him the way that He wants us to worship Him, not the way we want to worship Him."

5- What can we learn from the grape tree about this philosophy of having many rules to follow in Islamic law?

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 19

Gender Interaction and Marriage

14 GENDER INTERACTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. What is the Islamic perspective on gender interaction?
2. What sort of relationships should we develop with others?
3. What sort of relationships should we keep away from?
4. What is zinā? Why is it such a great sin?

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY

Is it appropriate for Muslims to have very close friends of the opposite gender?

ZINĀ - A MAJOR SIN IN ISLAM

Islam views sins related to sexual behaviour as the result of a lack of chastity and modesty, or put simply, a lack of shame (ḥayāʾ). In the Western world, chastity is defined only as sexual abstinence before marriage, but the word "chaste" and "chastity" originally meant "pure" or "virtuous". A Muslim should be chaste in speech, dress, interaction with others, as well as - of course - in their sexual behaviour.

Islam puts restraints on the intermingling of the sexes to prevent sexual promiscuity. It is not permissible for a man and woman to be together in private if there is a possibility of sexual temptation. It is forbidden to look at someone of the opposite sex with desire, unless, of course, one is married to him/her.

In English, fornication refers to sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman, whereas adultery is when a married person has sexual relations with someone other than his/her spouse. In Islam, both are ḥarām and major sins and referred to by one word – zinā. The Qurʾān forbids it strictly:

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلاً

Do not go near zinā, it is indeed an indecency and an evil way. ([17:32]

Rasūl Allāh (S) has warned us: **"Zinā has three punishments in this world and three in the Hereafter. In this world, people who commit zinā lose their respect, their life is shortened and they become poor. In the Hereafter, they will have a harsh trial (hisāb), Allāh will be wrathful with them and they will live in Hell forever."**

Zinā starts with looking at a non-maḥram with lust. This is called zinā of the eyes. Then it is followed by thinking sinful thoughts (zinā of the mind), followed by speaking sinful things or going towards it. Allāh (SWT) tells us not to even go near zinā, let alone commit this sin. This means that we should keep away from even looking at or chatting to a non-maḥram with lust, as it is the first step towards zinā.

Some of the many reasons why Islam forbids zinā is because it discourages people from getting married, brings many social evils into society, breaks families, denies children their rightful inheritance, causes the spread of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), promotes prostitution and generally drives human beings to become immoral and live like animals.

HOW DO WE REMAIN CHASTE?

Remaining chaste in today's world is not easy because physical pleasure is greatly emphasised and sex is thrown at us everywhere – in newspapers, TV, computer games, the internet, advertising, magazines and so on. We live in a Godless society where religion has no value to people and no one sees a problem with having a girlfriend/boyfriend, dressing indecently, drinking alcohol, listening to music, swearing, partying and just making physical pleasure the goal of life.

We must remember that the desire for a companion and spouse is not evil or wrong. It is natural and Islam has provided marriage as the means to acquiring it. One of the ways of combating the indecency all around us is to be married. Another way to be chaste is to observe ḥijāb especially when interacting with the opposite gender. Ḥijāb for men is to lower their gaze, to dress modestly, to speak with God-consciousness and not flirt with the opposite gender. Ḥijāb for women is also to dress decently with loose clothing as per the sharīʿah, not interact excessively with the opposite gender, whether in person or online.

We can also maintain chastity by avoiding places where we know we will be tempted to commit ḥarām acts. However, being chaste does not mean isolating oneself from society. We can get involved in society whilst ensuring we remain chaste by keeping our thoughts clean and acquiring taqwā. Chastity starts with being pure in thought and heart. We should always be aware that Allāh (SWT) is watching us and always ask ourselves this question: **If Imām al-Mahdī (A) was with me here today, would he be proud to call me his Shīʿah? What would my Imām think of me if he saw me doing this right now?**

Sometimes people are chaste in their speech and dress, but behave indecently when chatting with friends on the phone or computer. This is because it is easier to "hide" behind the keyboard, webcam, text messages etc. However, we must never forget that Allāh (SWT) watches everything we do.

IN SUMMARY

1. What is ḥayāʾ? How does a person with ḥayāʾ behave?
2. What is zinā? Why is it such a great sin?
3. What are the effects of zinā on a family?
4. What are the effects of zinā on society?
5. What can we do to keep away from sexual evils?

DID YOU KNOW?

Imām ʿAlī (A) has said, **"Beware of sinning when you are alone because at that time, the Judge is also the only Witness!"**

KEY POINTS

1. Islam puts great emphasis on social harmony. To maintain this harmony, it is necessary for everyone to remain chaste. Having ḥayāʾ (shame) helps one keep away from sexual evils.

2. Zinā refers to adultery or fornication. This is when a person commits a sexual act with someone he/she is not married to.

3. Allāh (SWT) tells us not to even go near zinā, meaning that we should not do anything that may lead to zinā. This includes unnecessary chatting with someone non-maḥram on the computer or phone.

15 MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. An introduction to marriage in Islam
2. The importance and benefits of marriage
3. How to select a good spouse

MY NOTES

MARRIAGE IS THE SUNNAH OF RASŪL ALLĀH (S)

Islam teaches us to channel all our natural desires, in a positive way and within the bounds of the sharīʿah. Islam is against the total suppression of the sexual urge and condemns celibacy and monasticism. Every Muslim should therefore marry early to channel sexual energy in a positive way. In fact, marriage becomes wājib if by not getting married a person is likely to engage in unlawful acts.

Rasūl Allāh (S) has said:

اَلنِّكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِيْ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِيْ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّيْ

Marriage is my sunnah (practice), one who leaves this sunnah is not one of my followers.

Just as some foods are permissible and others forbidden in Islam, some sexual activities are permissible and others forbidden. The only legitimate way of satisfying one's sexual desires is with one's spouse. All other forms of sexual activity including adultery, homosexuality, and masturbation are forbidden and are major sins.

Muslims should also not flirt when interacting with non-maḥram people. It is forbidden to try to seduce someone, in whatever way (in person, via internet chat or email). Muslim men and women should be models of chastity and dignity. This does not mean, however, that Muslims should be confined to their homes and not interact in society. They should study, work and participate in all social and political activities, but without infringing any of the laws of the sharīʿah. In an Islamic marriage, a solemn contract is made between a man and a woman to become life-partners and to fulfil all the responsibilities and enjoy those rights that the sharīʿah has laid down for them. An ʿaqd of nikāḥ (marriage contract) is recited to formalise the marriage.

The mahr (also called ṣadāq) is the wājib wedding gift that the bridegroom gives the bride. It is a token of friendship, a mark of honour for the woman, and security for her. It becomes the property of the wife and she can use it as she pleases. Anything that has value can be given as mahr. There is no specified amount but it should not be so high as to be beyond the financial status of the husband. When you feel you are ready for marriage, discuss with your parents or an older relative you trust (who can speak to your parents on your behalf) about your need to get married sooner.

This is especially true if your parents expect you to first complete university, find a job, etc. Parents usually want their children to show a sense of responsibility before they get married. Learn to be responsible and mature so that you can take on the responsibility of your own family sooner.

ACTIVITY

Make a list of things that you feel are important to you when selecting a spouse.

WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD WE LOOK FOR IN A SPOUSE?

The most important quality that one should look for in a spouse is taqwā (God-consciousness). One who has taqwā will never violate the limits of religion and therefore will not be unjust to his or her spouse. If a woman receives a proposal from a man who is not wealthy but is God-conscious, prays the daily ṣalāh, comes from a respectable family and is not a reputed sinner, the proposal should not be rejected only because of his financial situation.

Some aḥādīth relate that the cause of corruption and mischief in society is when women reject the proposal of decent men or demand high sums of dowry (mahr).

Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Marry off those who are single among you and the upright... If they are poor, Allāh will enrich them out of His grace, and Allāh is all-bounteous, all-knowing. [24:32]

What sustains a marriage in the long-term is not physical looks or wealth, but piety, kindness of heart, patience, love and hard work. What often causes a marriage to break is selfishness, laziness, intolerance, impatience, sinful habits and disregard for Allāh (SWT) and religion, even when there is beauty and wealth.

A pious and religious spouse who is intelligent and not lazy will be a positive influence on one's progeny; and the children from such a marriage will be productive and useful members of their society. As a rule of thumb, one should seek a life partner who is as close to his or her self in religious values and social status. There is also no harm is seeking someone who is closer in financial status, education, culture and even physical stature as such closeness and compatibility only helps the new marital relationship adjust and thrive more easily.

IN SUMMARY

1. Why does Islam place a lot of emphasis on marriage?
2. What has Rasūl Allāh (S) said about marriage?
3. Why should one not reject the marriage proposal of a good person purely based on his financial status?
4. What qualities should we look for when selecting a spouse?

DID YOU KNOW?

Divorce is permissible but highly discouraged and disliked in Islam. One should not take the decision of selecting a spouse lightly as an incompatible choice of life partner often leads to divorce.

KEY POINTS

1. Islam highly encourages and recommends marriage because it is the ḥalāl way to fulfil one's sexual desires and start a family.

2. Rasūl Allāh (S) has said that marriage is from his sunnah, and whoever leaves this sunnah is not one of his followers.

3. In an Islamic marriage, an ʿaqd of nikāḥ is recited to formalise the marriage, and the husband has to give a gift called "mahr" to his bride.

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 20

Intoxicants

MY NOTES

example, driving can cause the death of innocent people. Similarly, children whose mothers take alcohol in pregnancy are born with its harmful effects.

Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A) explained why alcohol is condemned in Islam. He said: **"Alcohol is the root of all evil and sin. A person who drinks alcohol loses his sanity. At the time he is drunk, he does not know Allāh (SWT), does not fear committing any sin, does not respect anyone's rights and does not stop from committing evil openly. The spirit of piety and faith departs from him and only the impure and vicious spirit, which is far off from the mercy of Allāh (SWT) remains in his body. Allāh, His angels, His prophets and the true believers curse such a man, and his daily prayers are not accepted for forty days."**

The use of recreational drugs is also ḥarām in Islam, because they too are intoxicants and have similar effects to alcohol.

BASIC RULINGS REGARDING INTOXICANTS

Alcohol is najis al-ʿayn and makes other things najis. Anything that comes into contact with alcohol (that is for drinking and not for industrial use) becomes najis and must be made ṭāhir using water. Industrial alcohol that is used to make things like perfume is not considered najis.

Food containing even small amounts of alcohol is najis and cannot be consumed, even if the alcohol has "evaporated" in the cooking process. This is because even though the effects of alcohol may no longer be there in the food, it has become najis and cannot be eaten. It is also not permissible to consume alcohol for medicinal purposes.

If we buy anything with alcohol or someone gives us a gift with alcohol (e.g. chocolates or cake with rum), we cannot even give it to a non-Muslim and must throw it away.

Sitting at a table where alcohol is served is not permissible. When we go out with non-Muslim friends from college or work, it is important that we do

not sit with them if they are drinking alcohol. We should avoid any restaurant that has a bar, sells alcohol or even permits people to bring their own alcohol.

It is not permissible to grow crops for alcohol production, produce it, buy or sell it. In fact, all aspects of alcohol trade from the time crops, such as grapes and barley, are grown on the farm to the consumption of the alcoholic drink by the end user is forbidden in Islam. This includes distributing, advertising and profiting from companies that deal in alcohol production.

Islam forbids all types of intoxicants, including drugs. By 'drugs' we do not mean medicines, but recreational drugs that are taken to alter a person's state of mind. They are usually addictive and alter mood and behaviour (just like alcohol). Examples of such drugs include opium, heroin, cocaine and marijuana.

Sometimes pain-killers are taken in larger quantities or stronger doses to give the same effect as narcotics. Such usages is also considered ḥarām.

IN SUMMARY

1. What does the Qurʾān say about alcohol consumption?
2. Is it permissible to use alcoholic drinks in small quantities which do not cause addiction?
3. What are the ten groups of people that *Rasūl Allāh* (S) has cursed due to their involvement in alcohol?

DID YOU KNOW?

Rasūl Allāh (S) cursed ten groups of people who have anything to do with alcohol:

1. Those who cultivate a crop with intention of producing alcohol from it
2. Those who crush the fruit to make wine
3. Those who transport it
4. Those who take delivery of it from the supplier
5. Those who sell it
6. Those who buy it
7. Those who serve it
8. Those who drink it
9. Those who sit at a table where alcohol is drunk
10. Those who use the income earned from alcohol

KEY POINTS

1. Consuming alcohol as well as dealing in any stage of its production, distribution, sale and consumption. is ḥarām is Islam.

2. Alcohol is the root of many evils and leads a person to sin.

3. Alcohol abuse destroys lives and leads to family breakdown. The habit is also addictive and difficult to give up.

4. We should not sit at a table where alcohol is served.

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 21

Hajj

08 ḤAJJ

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. What is Ḥijjat al-Islām?
2. What are the conditions for Ḥajj to become wājib?
3. What are the main acts of ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ and Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ?

MY NOTES

ḤIJJAT AL-ISLĀM

Ḥajj is one of the wājib acts of worship (ʿibādāt) in Islam. It refers to the annual pilgrimage to Makkah that is performed every year in the month of Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah, the last month in the Islamic calendar. Participation in Ḥajj is wājib on all Muslims at least once in their lifetimes, as long as they fulfil the following conditions:

* **bulūgh** (puberty)
* **ʿaql** (sanity)
* **istitāʿah** (affordability)

The conditions of istitāʿah are wealth (one should be able to afford it), health (one should be physically healthy to make the journey to Makkah and participate in ḥajj) and transport (including availability of visas).

Those who wish to go for ḥajj should:

* ensure they have no debts to pay. If they owe money to anyone they should pay it back first or ask their permission to pay it later.
* ensure the money for Ḥajj is clean and from ḥalāl earnings. This is by ensuring that any wājib taxes like khums and zakāt have been paid.
* prepare a will just in case they die before returning home; and ensure the executor(S) of their will who is not travelling with them knows where to find the will if they need to.
* it is recommended to give ṣadaqah before setting out on the journey.

The annual ḥajj (ḥijjat al-Islam) is made up of two parts:

1. **ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ** (that can be done anytime between 1st Shawwāl and 8th Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah), and
2. **Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ** (that must be done from the 9th to 13th Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah of the same year as the ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ).

Pilgrims have to start their ḥajj at any one of five specific locations away from Makkah. These five places are called **mīqāt**. At the mīqāt, a pilgrim puts on a special dress called the **iḥrām**, makes the niyyah for ḥajj and recites the **talbiyyah** as follows:

Labbayk, Allāhumma labbayk. Lā sharika laka labbayk

At Your service (here I am) O Allāh, at Your service. There is no partner for You. At Your service.

The iḥrām for men is two pieces of unstitched cloth: One piece to cover from the waist to the knees and the other for the upper body. Men cannot cover their head or feet. For women, iḥrām is a simple long dress with ḥijāb. It is recommended for the iḥrām to be white, both for men and women. From the miqāt, pilgrims head to Makkah to perform ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ which consists of **tawāf** (going round the Kaʿbah seven times), a two rakaʿāt **ṣalāh after tawāf**, **saʿī** (running between the hills of Ṣafāʾ and Marwah) and **taqṣīr** (clipping hair or finger nails).

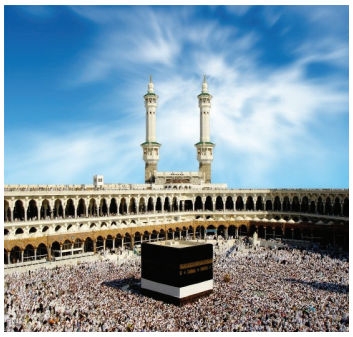
ACTIVITY

Can you recall any similarities between the acts of Ḥajj and the lives of Nabī Ibrāhīm (A) and his son Nabī Ismāʿīl (A)?

ḤAJJ AL-TAMATTUʿ

The wājib acts in Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ (the 2nd part of the annual Ḥajj) are:

1. Making the **niyyah** for Ḥajj at-Tamattuʿ and wearing the **iḥrām** in Makkah before heading out to ʿArafah.
2. Wuqūf (stopping) at ʿ**Arafah**, an open plain outside Makkah, and staying there on the 9th of Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah from ẓuhr until maghrib.
3. Spend the night at **Mashʿar**, a place between ʿArafah and Makkah (also called Muzdalifah).
4. Going to **Minā** after sunrise on the 10th of Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah (ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā). At Minā, a pilgrim has to do **Ramī al-Jamarāt** by throwing pebbles at the last Jamarah (The Jamarāt are three stone pillars or walls that symbolise shayṭān), perform the **sacrifice** of an animal and shave the head (**ḥalaq**) or clip some hair from the head (**taqṣīr**). Women are not allowed to shave their head, but for men it is highly recommended to do so.
5. Staying at Minā for the next two nights and throwing pebbles at all three Jamarāt.
6. Return to Makkah to perform tawāf of the Kaʿbah seven times. This is called **Tawāf al-Ḥajj**.
7. Offering a **two rakʿah ṣalāh** after tawāf near Maqām Ibrāhīm.
8. Performing **Saʿī** between the hills **Ṣafāʾ** and **Marwah**.
9. Performing **Tawāf al-Nisā** (another tawāf around the Kaʿbah).
10. Offering two rakaʿāt ṣalāh for tawāf al-Nisāʾ near Maqām Ibrāhīm.



This marks the end of Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ and a pilgrim can then remove his or her iḥrām. It is important to note that in the state of iḥrām, there is a list of about 25 things which are ḥarām for the pilgrim. One should become familiarised with this list before going for Ḥajj or ʿUmrah. Before leaving Makkah, it is mustaḥab to do a final tawāf called **Tawāf al-Widāʾ** followed by 2 rakaʿāt near Maqām Ibrāhīm. Whenever a person goes for ʿUmrah or Ḥajj, it is also highly recommended to go to Madīnah and visit Rasūl Allāh (S) and members of the Ahl al-Bayt (A) buried in Jannat al-Baqī near the Masjid al-Nabawī.

IN SUMMARY

1. What is Ḥijjat al-Islām? What are the conditions for it to become wājib?
2. What are the miqāt? What three things must a pilgrim do at one of the miqāt?
3. What acts does ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ consist of?
4. What is Ramī al-Jamarāt?
5. What are the three places outside Makkah where the pilgrim has to go during Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ?

DID YOU KNOW?

It is highly recommended to go to Makkah for ʿUmrah in other months besides Ḥajj in Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah. When performing ʿUmrah, it is wājib to enter Makkah in Iḥrām and perform ʿUmrah al-Tamattuʿ which consists of tawāf, a two rakaʿāt ṣalāh after tawāf, saʿī and taqṣīr. Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ is only done in Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah, so for ʿUmrah pilgrims do not go to ʿArafah, Muzdalifah (Mashʿar) or Minā.

KEY POINTS

1. The annual pilgrimage to Makkah in the month of Dhūʾl-Ḥijjah is called **Ḥijjat al-Islām**.
2. It is wājib on all sane and bāligh Muslims to perform Ḥajj at least once in their lifetime if they have the **istitāʿah** (affordability, health and possibility of travelling to Makkah).
3. Ḥijjat al-Islām consist of two parts: ʿ**Umrah al-Tamattuʿ** and **Ḥajj al-Tamattuʿ**.
4. Pilgrims must first go to one of the **miqāt** to put on the **iḥrām**, make niyyah for Ḥajj and recite the **talbiyyah**.

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 22-24

Fiqh:

1. Mustahab Prayers
2. Khums
3. Zakat

01 MUSTAḤAB PRAYERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The importance of mustaḥab prayers
2. The nawāfil prayers
3. Ṣalāt al-layl

MY NOTES

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMING MUSTAḤAB PRAYERS

Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān that He created us so that we may worship Him. Prayer is the most important form of worship and helps us get closer to Allāh (SWT). Rasūl Allāh (S) has said that ṣalāh is the miʿrāj of a muʾmin. Therefore, if we want to get closer to Allāh (SWT), we must perform ṣalāh - not because we have to - but because we want to out of love for Him.

When we do something wājib, we don't have a choice. We have to do it because we are afraid of punishment in the Hereafter. On the other hand, when we do something mustaḥab, it is out of choice. Allāh (SWT) loves us even more for that act of sincerity, which is why the reward for mustaḥab acts is greater than the reward for wājib actions.

Every Muslim must pray 5 times a day. These wājib prayers include fajr, ẓuhr, ʿaṣr, maghrib and ʿishāʾ, making a total of 17 rakaʿāt every day.

In addition to these, there are 34 more rakaʿāt that are not wājib but highly recommended to pray every day. These are called the **nawāfil** prayers (singular is nāfilah prayer).

Imām al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (A) has said that the signs of a muʾmin are five:

1. praying 51 rakaʿāt a day (17 wājib and 34 nawāfil)
2. going for ziyārah of Imām al-Ḥusayn (A) on the day of Arbaʿīn
3. wearing a ring on the right hand (e.g. ʿaqīq ring)
4. a mark of sajdah on the forehead
5. reciting Bismillāh loudly in ṣalāh (for the two sūrahs during qiyām).'

The 34 rakaʿāt of nawāfil prayers should be performed as follows:

* 2 rakaʿāt nāfilah before praying fajr ṣalāh
* 8 rakaʿāt nāfilah before praying ẓuhr ṣalāh
* 8 rakaʿāt nāfilah before praying ʿaṣr ṣalāh
* 4 rakaʿāt nāfilah after praying maghrib ṣalāh
* 1 rakʿah nāfilah prayed as 2 rakaʿāt sitting down after ʿishāʾ ṣalāh, and
* 11 rakaʿāt nāfilah anytime between midnight and fajr ṣalāh. This set of prayers is also known as ṣalāt al-layl.

Note that the nāfilah of maghrib and ʿishāʾ is prayed after the wājib ṣalāh and not before.

A mustaḥab ṣalāh cannot be more than 2 rakaʿāt, so when we have to pray 8 rakaʿāt or 4 rakaʿāt nāfilah, we have to pray it in units of two (just like ṣalāt al-fajr).

If we are unable to perform all the 34 rakaʿāt of nawāfil prayers, we should try to perform as many as we can.

ACTIVITY

Create a list of people you would like to pray for in ṣalāt al-layl. You may start your list with the name of Imam al -Mahdī (A)

ṢALĀT AL-LAYL

The 11 rakaʿāt midnight nāfilah ṣalāh is called ṣalāt al-layl or ṣalāt al-taḥajjud. It is the most important nāfilah ṣalāh and is not attached to any wājib ṣalāh. It can be prayed any time between midnight and fajr, but it is recommended to pray it just before fajr time. Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا

And during a part of the night, pray taḥajjud, as a nāfilah (extra) for yourself. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory. [17:79]

Q: How do we perform ṣalāt al-layl?

STEP 1	4 prayers of 2 rakaʿāt each, making a total of 8 rakaʿāt. The niyyah for each 2 rakaʿāt ṣalāh is: 'I am praying 2 rakaʿāt for ṣalāt al-layl qurbatan ilallāh'
STEP 2	Perform a 2 rakaʿāt ṣalāh with the niyyah: 'I am praying 2 rakaʿāt **ṣalāt al-shafʿ** qurbatan ilallāh'. Do not recite qunūt in this ṣalāh.
STEP 3	Pray 1 rakʿah standing with the niyyah: 'I am praying 1 rakʿah **ṣalāt al-witr** qurbatan ilallāh'. This is the most important part of ṣalāt al-layl. After reciting sūrat al-Fātiḥah and another sūrah, raise your hands for qunūt and recite the following duʿā': بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيْمِ لآ اِلَهَ اِلاَّ اللهُ الْحَلِيْمُ الْكَرِيْمُ لآ اِلَهَ اِلاَّ اللهُ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ سُبْحَانَ اللهِ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبِّ الاَرْضِيْنَ السَّبْعِ وَمَا فِيْهِنَّ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ وَ مَا فَوْقَهُنَّ وَمَا تَحْتَهُنَّ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَ سَلاَمٌ عَلى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ وَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ Then recite seven times: هذَا مَقَامُ الْعَآئِذِ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ Then recite seventy times: اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ رَبِّي وَ اَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ Then say اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِ and mention the names of 40 Muslims, either living or dead, asking Allāh to forgive them. Don't forget your parents, siblings and relatives who have passed away. If you do not have any names to mention, you can recite: اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ Then say 300 times: اَلْعَفْوَ Then do the takbīr, go to rukūʿ and complete the ṣalāh as normal.

IN SUMMARY

1. According to the ḥadīth of Imām al-ʿAskarī (A), what are the 5 signs of a muʾmin?
2. Why is it more rewarding to perform a mustaḥab action compared to a wājib act?
3. What are the nawāfil prayers? When do we perform them?
4. What is ṣalāt al-layl? When is it performed?

DID YOU KNOW?

Imām al-Ḥusayn (A) loved ṣalāt al-layl so much that in his parting advice to his sister Sayyidah Zaynab he told her to remember him in her ṣalāt al-layl.

KEY POINTS

1. Performing **mustaḥab** ṣalāh is highly rewarding because we perform them out of love for Allāh (SWT) rather than out of compulsion.
2. In addition to the 17 rakaʿāt which are wājib, there are a total of 34 **nawāfil** prayers which are highly recommended.
3. The most important of these nawāfil prayers is **ṣalāt al-layl**.

02 KHUMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction and basic rulings regarding khums
2. How to calculate khums on savings
3. How to purify wealth that has been mixed with ḥarām earnings
4. The recipients of khums

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY

A person earns £24,000 and has a total expense of £20,500. How much khums is she required to pay?

WHAT IS KHUMS?

Just like ṣalāh and ṣawm, khums and zakāt are also acts of worship (ʿibādah) that are wājib on all Muslims. They are not merely taxes on one's wealth. We cannot hope to gain spiritual perfection and the pleasure of Allāh (SWT) unless we spends our wealth for others. Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

You will never become truly righteous until you spend from what you love most. And whatever you spend of anything, indeed Allāh knows it. [3:92]

By paying zakāt and khums, we show our concern for the poor and needy. These taxes also keep us away from selfishness and greed, and purify our wealth.

The main differences between khums and zakāt include the items on which they are applicable and their recipients. Khums is the right of Rasūl Allāh (S) and his family. It plays a very important role in maintaining the Islamic society, in tablīgh work (the propagation of Islam) and the independence of the ʿulamāʾ from the influence of governments. It has been mentioned in many aḥādīth that one who does not pay it has stolen a share belonging to Rasūl Allāh (S)'s family. Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth (khums) of it is for Allāh and the Messenger, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveller… [8:41]

The khums we pay is divided into two equal parts. One part is the share of our living Imām and is called **Sahm al-Imām**. The other is the share of the poor Sādāt (the descendants of Rasūl Allāh (S)) and is called **Sahm al-Sādāt**.

During the ghaybah of the Imām, we give the Sahm al-Imām to our Marjaʿ, who uses it for religious and humanitarian causes. If we know of a worthy cause such as the building of an Islamic centre, helping an orphanage, tablīgh work or a humanitarian cause, we can ask our Marjaʿ for permission to give our share of Sahm al-Imām to that project.

Sometimes charitable organizations and Islamic institutions ask the Marjaʿ for permission to collect khums for their projects. The Marjaʿ will give them a written permission, called an **ijāzah**, to collect khums. You can then choose to give them your annual khums directly.

The Sahm al-Sādāt can also be given to the Marjaʿ who distributes it to the poor Sādāt. A poor Sayyid is one who lacks the means for one year's respectable living (in accordance to his/her social status). Khums is given to Sādāt who are Shīʿah Ithnā ʿAsharī and who pray and don't sin openly.

HOW IS KHUMS CALCULATED?

Khums is a one-fifth (20%) tax that all bāligh Muslims are required to pay. It is applicable on several items but the most common ones are one's annual savings and when ḥalāl wealth or property has become mixed up with ḥarām wealth.

Khums applies to all earnings including profit from business, salaries and wages. Calculating khums can be very confusing if we don't have a fixed khums date. The first step is to select a fixed date of our choice when we will calculate our khums every year.

We should then calculate our total income and subtract from this total income all our expenses for that year. Whatever remains is our savings as we did not use it during the year. We should then pay 20% of our savings as khums. The remaining 80% is ours to keep and no further khums will be applicable on it in subsequent years.

Even if a person has an ongoing debt like a mortgage, they still need to pay khums on their savings. They can however reduce how much khums they pay by paying more towards their mortgage and settling any other ongoing loans and debts before the khums becomes due.

If a person has earned wealth unlawfully (e.g. by gambling) and it is mixed with his lawful wealth and he/she has no idea how much is lawful and how much is unlawful, this wealth can be purified by paying khums once on the whole amount. THereafter it can be assumed that the remaining 80% is ḥalāl. Of course this doesn't change the fact that the person has committed a sin by acquiring the wealth unlawfully and is obligated to repent and undo the ḥarām act if possible e.g. return wealth to the rightful owner if stolen or taken unlawfully.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is no khums on the following items among others:

- Mahr (dowry), that is wājib for a husband to give to his wife at the time of marriage
- The earning or property of a child who is not bāligh
- Inheritance

KEY POINTS

1. Khums is one of the Furūʿ al-Dīn and an act of ʿibādah.

2. Khums has two parts: sahm al-Imām (share of the Imām of our time) and sahm al-Sādāt (share of the poor and needy descendants of Rasūl Allāh (S).

3. We should give our khums to our marjaʿ who will then utilise it in the right way for Islamic and humanitarian causes.

4. We can also give our khums to those who have an ijāzah, to collect khums.

IN SUMMARY

1. What is khums? Why should we pay khums?
2. How is khums calculated?
3. What are the two parts of khums? Who are the recipients of each of these parts?
4. What is an ijāzah for khums?

03 ZAKĀT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction and basic rulings regarding zakāt
2. How to calculate zakāt
3. The recipients of zakāt

MY NOTES

WHAT IS ZAKĀT?

Zakāt and khums are not merely Islamic taxes. They are acts of ʿibādah and are part of Furūʿ al-Dīn (the Branches of Religion) that are wājib on all Muslims. The literal meaning of the word zakāt is 'something which purifies'. Zakāt purifies our wealth by making those less fortunate share in a portion of it. Through zakāt and khums, we can achieve a relatively just and fair distribution of wealth in society. In an Islamic society all must live together as one family and share their wealth. Every member of society should have the means to live decently. If one group lacks it, it is the duty of the others to support them.

Allāh (SWT) says in the Qurʾān:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ
مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And maintain the prayer (ṣalāh) and give the zakāt. The good that you send ahead for your souls, you shall find it (waiting for you) with Allāh. Indeed Allāh sees best what you do. [2:110]

In this verse, Allāh (SWT) is telling us that we should not think even for a moment that we are losing the wealth that we give away in the form of khums and zakāt. In fact, it is an investment we are making for our ākhirah (life in the Hereafter) because when we die and go to the next life, we will see our good deeds there and enjoy their rewards. Zakāt al-Māl is an annual tax that must be paid on certain items such as specific agricultural produce and livestock, and on gold and silver currency. It is wājib on nine items. If a person has any of these items beyond a certain quantity for over a year, then they must give zakāt on those items.

The nine items on which zakāt is wājib are:

WHEAT

BARLEY

GRAPES/RAISINS

DATES

GOLD COINS

SILVER COINS

CAMELS

CATTLE

SHEEP & GOATS

ACTIVITY

Read verse 9:60 and list the eight groups of people who can receive zakāt al-māl

The amount of zakāt to be paid varies depending on the item, quantity and type of crop or livestock. The amount of zakāt to be paid on gold and silver coins is 2.5%. If zakāt has been paid once on a quantity, it does not have to be paid again every year.

WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF ZAKĀT?

The following āyah of Qurʾān tells us whom to give zakāt:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Ṣadaqāt (zakāt) are only for the poor and needy, those employed to collect zakāt, those whose hearts are to be reconciled, for the freeing of slaves, those in debt, in the way of Allāh, and for the traveller. This is an obligation from Allāh, and Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise. [9:60]

Zakāt can therefore be distributed to any of the following eight groups:

1. **Fuqarāʾ**: The needy - those who are unable to meet their annual expenditure.
2. **Masākīn:** The poor - Those who live even below the level of the needy.
3. **ʿAmilīn:** The salary of those who are employed to collect zakāt.
4. **Muʿallafat al-Qulub:** Those non-Muslims whom Rasūl Allāh (S) or the Imām or his representative think advisable to help from zakāt so as to gain their sympathy and support for Islam and Muslims.
5. **Riqāb:** To free the slaves. Islam greatly emphasises the freeing of slaves so that slavery can be abolished.
6. **Ghārimīn:** Those in debt to help pay off their debts if they are having difficulty repaying them.
7. **Fī Sabīl Allāh:** To help in religious matters and anything that is done in the way of Allāh e.g. building a masjid, school, improving roads etc.
8. **Ibn al-Sabīl:** A traveller who has run out of money and does not have the means to return home.

In all the cases above, the recipient of zakāt must be a Shīʿah Ithnā ʿĀsharī Muslim who is not a reputed sinner and who is not a dependant of the person paying the zakāt. The zakāt of a non-sayyid should not be given to a sayyid unless he/she is in dire need and the khums (sahm al-sādāt) given to him/her is not sufficient. The zakāt of a sayyid can be given to help a non-sayyid. When the Imām is present, zakāt should be given to him. During the ghaybah of the Imām, if a person cannot find anyone deserving to receive the zakāt, it may be given to the Marjaʿ or his agents (wukalāʾ) who will then give it to those who deserve it.

IN SUMMARY

1. What is the literal meaning of zakāt?
2. When we pay zakāt, we don't lose that money. How is this possible?
3. What are the nine things on which zakāt is wājib?
4. Who are the 8 groups of people who are eligible to receive zakāt?
5. How much zakāt should be paid on gold and silver currency?

DID YOU KNOW?

Besides Zakāt al-Māl, there is also a specific Zakāt that is paid every year on the day of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr. It is given at the end of the month of Ramaḍān to help the poor. This zakāt is also wājib on every bāligh, sane Muslim and is called zakāt al-fiṭr or simply fiṭrah.

KEY POINTS

1. Zakāt is an Islamic tax which is wājib on certain items. The literal meaning of Zakāt is to purify. Zakāt purifies our wealth and ensures a more equal distribution of wealth in society.

2. Zakāt al-māl is wājib on 9 items including wheat, barley, dates, grapes or raisins, cattle, sheep or goats, camels, gold and silver coins.

3. The recipients of Zakāt have been mentioned in the Qurʾān.

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 25-29

Fiqh

25-26: Philosophy of Islamic Rulings

27-29: Hijab: Challenges, Evidence and Philosophy

Lesson 25-26- Philosophy of Islamic Law

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Last year, we learned some answers to basic questions about Islamic Law and its philosophy. We are now going to look at the philosophy of Islamic Law a little deeper.

Importance of Islamic Law

Intuition dictates that we need to be guided in life as to a) what is the goal of life and b) how to get there. The teachings from our Creator that tell us where we came from, what our goal is and how to get there is called **Islam**. That's why Islam is a way of life.

Islam teaches us that our destination is (return to Allah), and therefore Muslims need to learn how to get there in the best manner possible. The way to get to the destination is called the Shariah (the laws of Islam). Following the laws of Islam is following a path towards Allah.

Every law in Islam is there for a reason and it helps us towards getting to our goal. The Qur'an states that the religion of Islam is the complete and perfect religion (Al-Maa'idah 5:3). There is no law in Islam which is "just because."

The teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (a) emphasize the great importance of learning the Shari'ah and acting upon it. Imam as-Sadiq (a) says, "Learning something about what is *halal* and *haram* from one who speaks truthfully is better than the entire [material] world and whatever gold and silver lies within." (al-Mahasin v. 1 p. 299).

A companion of Imam as-Sadiq (a) said to Imam as-Sadiq (a), "I have a son who wishes to ask you about what is *halal* and *haram* and will not ask you about things which are unimportant." He said, "Is there anything better than *halal* and *haram* that people can ask about?"

Imam as-Sadiq (a) also said, "Shame on a Muslim who doesn't dedicate one

day of his week to learn about his religion and ask about it." (al-Mahasin v. 1 p. 225)

Reason behind Islamic Law

There are two "reasons" behind why Islamic Laws are the way they are:
1) Illah or Daleel which means the "proof" or evidence behind the Islamic law. Islamic law is derived from three sources: the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt, and the intellect (the aql). The proof tells us where in the Qur'an, Sunnah, or logic does it say that this is a law.

Example: Hajj is Wajib once in a lifetime as soon as one is of age (Baligh) and able to go.

Why is it Wajib? In the Qur'an, 3:97, Allah says, "And it is the duty of mankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House for those who can afford the journey to it." Based on this verse and other evidence we know that Hajj is waajib as has been stated.

2) Hikmah or Falsafah which means the philosophy and wisdom behind the law - how does this law help us or prevent harm from reaching us?

Why do we have to pray? In the Qur'an, 29:45, Allah says, "Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah is surely greater."

From this verse we understand three points of wisdom behind salah (why we have to pray):
1) Praying prevents indecencies
2) Praying prevents sin
3) Praying can help us remember Allah

Why is it important for someone to follow the Law completely and not just partially?

Answers:
a) Islam means submission which means that we, as slaves of Allah, look to Him for instruction and we obey. One who picks and chooses is not submitting to Allah; they are setting up another master alongside Allah which is a form of

shirk.

b) Allah wants us to worship Him the way that He wants us to worship Him, not the way we want to worship Him.

c) When trying to reach a goal where we are not familiar with the path to that goal, we need to follow the instructions carefully, or else we might perish along the way.

Regarding the importance of following Islam completely, the Qur'an says, "You who believe, enter absolutely into Islam! Do not follow Satan's footsteps; he is an open enemy of yours." (al-Baqarah 2:208).

Purposely staying ignorant about laws is not a valid excuse for not following Islamic Law. Imam as-Sadiq (a) said:

Allah, the Exalted, will ask His [rebellious] servant on the Day of Resurrection, "My servant,

were you learned [about the *halal* and *haram*]?"

If he says "Yes," Allah will say to him, "Why did you not act upon what you knew?"

If he says "I was ignorant," He will say to him, "Why did you not learn such that you could act

[accordingly]?" (al-Amaali of al-Mufid, p. 227)

Equity vs. Equality in Islamic Law

Because a few Islamic laws have different provisions for males and females, the question is sometimes asked: If Allah is Just, how can His religion discriminate on the basis of gender?

The answer, in brief, is that Allah is Just, and His religion is also based on fairness and justice. Justice, however, does not mean equality in all cases.

Let us look at this issue in some more detail.

Men and Women are Equal in the Eyes of Allah

On a spiritual level women and men are created with same potential for perfection. "Whoso does good deeds, whether male or female, and has faith,

shall enter the Garden and will not be wronged one fleck." (4:124)

Islam acknowledges only two factors for superiority: Taqwa (the extent to which one is aware of Allah and is careful over his responsibilities towards Him), and Knowledge. Allah says, "…Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most who has the most Taqwa among you…" (al-Hujuraat 49:13). He also says, "…Are those who know equal to those who do not know…" (Az-Zumar 39:9). (Note to teacher: ask students how these verses establish the measures for differentiation in the eyes of Allah).

Other such factors as gender, wealth, nobility of birth, and popularity, that other cultures may look upon as tokens of superiority, hold no real value.

Equality vs. Equaity

Even though there are some difference in the details of some Islamic laws, on the whole, men and women have the same amount of privileges and rights. Regarding women, Allah says, "…and they have rights similar to those against them [that men possess] in a just manner…" (Al-Baqarah 2:228). According to the verse, ""Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn" (an-Nisaa 4:32) both women and men have the right to earn and own their own property.

However, there are differences in some areas of law due to physical differences and differences in roles / responsibilities between men and women and society. In such cases, justice in the law calls for equity, not equality.

One example is in with inheritance. Generally speaking, according to Islamic Law, a woman takes one-third of the inheritance and a man two-thirds. This is usually the case; there are, however, exceptions. For example, when a child dies and his / her parents are alive, they receive an equal amount from the inheritance of the child. And if someone dies and his/her father and daughter are the only living inheritors, the daughter receives more than the father.

At first glance, it may seem that the law is unfair because usually the man receives more than the woman. However, when looked at from an overall perspective, the law actually benefits women.

The reason is because in Islam, it is a husband's responsibility to provide for his wife and children. When one generation passes away, the wealth is

inherited by the next generation. According to Islamic law, of this wealth, generally speaking two-thirds goes to men and one-third to women. The two-thirds portion that men inherit must be spent for the welfare of the entire family, whereas women have no obligation to share their one-third. So even though men are put in charge of two-thirds of the wealth, it is women who actually receive two-thirds of the wealth [by holding on to their one-third and at the same time benefitting from the two-thirds that goes to men].

Imam ar-Ridha (a.s) said: "The share of the females, in the inheritance, is half that of the males because when a female enters into marriage she receives [her dowry money], while the male is obliged to give something. In addition, it is the responsibility of the males to shoulder the expenses of the females whereas the females are neither responsible for their own expenses nor that of the males."

Questions for Review

- Define the terms: Shariah, Illah, Hikmah
- Quote a tradition from the Ahlul Bayt (a) that speaks about the importance of learning Islamic law.
- Compare and contrast the proof behind and philosophy of Islamic laws.
- Does the question about equality vs. equity in Islamic Law pertain to proof or philosophy behind Islamic Law?
- Does Islam discriminate based on gender? If so, when and why?

Lesson 27-28

Bismihi Ta'ala

Philosophy & Ruling of Hijab: Questions & Challenges

Session with Sh. Salim – Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Story: The Black Dot

One day, a professor entered his classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They all waited anxiously at their desks for the exam to begin.

The professor handed out the exams with the text facing down, as usual. Once he handed them all out, he asked the students to turn over the papers.

To everyone's surprise, there were no questions–just a black dot in the center of the paper.

The professor, seeing the expression on everyone's faces, told them the following: "I want you to write about what you see there." The students, confused, got started on the inexplicable task.

At the end of the class, the professor took all the exams, and started reading each one of them out loud in front of all the students.

All of them, with no exception, defined the black dot, trying to explain its position in the center of the sheet. After all had been read, the classroom silent, the professor started to explain:

"I'm not going to grade you on this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot – and the same thing happens in our lives. However, we insist on focusing only on the black dot – the health issues that bother us, the lack of money, the complicated relationship with a family member, the disappointment with a friend. The dark spots are very small when compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our minds. Take your eyes away from the black dots in your lives. Enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you. Be happy and live a life filled with love!"

A similar story from Nabi Isa (a)

One day Jesus and his disciples were walking in the old city, which had very narrow streets. They came across the carcass of a dead dog. The dog had been dead for a long time, and its rotten stench filled the whole alley. The disciples of Jesus held their noses, picked up the hem of their robes, and tiptoed around the dead creature. One of them said: "Whew ... piff! What a horrible stench!" Another one said: "The very sight of this makes me sick to my stomach." One by one they made their way past the dead creature, even as others in town gathered around the carcass to further remark on its hideousness.

Jesus, and Jesus alone, stopped by the dead dog. He knelt down, and lovingly gazed at the dog. After a long pause, he finally said: "Praise be to God, what beautiful teeth this creature has."

Scenario 1:

Question: How would you answer someone who asks you if you eat fish?

Answer: I eat fish, but I am not allowed to eat fish without scales.

Why? What would you say?

Answer: I have a marja' who told me.

We're not talking to them about *hikmah* or *daleel* yet. Tell them I follow this logical principle where I resort to the opinion of an expert. Islamic law has a lot of complexities to

it; it's not easy. The experts on Islamic law say, based on three resources (Quran, Sunnah/words of Ahlulbayt, and *aql*), they have determined it's something we're not allowed to eat. If someone says can you show me where it says it in the Quran, it's not something you're required to know about, but I'll ask and get back to you.
Does the Quran mention anything about eating fish with scales? It's not there. But there are a number of *ahadith* that mention this. Imam Sadiq (as) says you can have fish that have scales and shrimp; not lobsters, squids, etc.
Be careful with providing a scientific answer – it might be an answer, but not the only one. The fish who don't have scales tend to be the bottom feeders of the tank/ ocean. For example, catfish are at the bottom because they eat the excrements of the other fish.

Scenario 2:

Question: You're a hijabi. Tell me why you wear hijab?
Answer: We have a process to know what to do and not do; we resort to experts. In addition to that, let me show you a couple of the verses and traditions of the Ahlulbayt that are used by expert scholars to derive the rulings. But there's a lot more to it than that.
Verse 24:31: "And tell the faithful women to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts, and not to display their charms, beyond what is [acceptably] visible, and let them draw their scarfs over their bosoms, and not display their charms except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their sons, or their husband's son, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' son, or their women, or their slave girls, or male dependants lacking [sexual] desire, or children who are not yet conscious of female sexuality. And let them not thump their feet to make known their hidden ornaments. Rally to Allah in repentance, O faithful, so that you may be felicitous."
Verse before 24:30: "And tell the faithful men to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts. That is more decent for them. Allah is indeed well aware of what they do."

1) Cast down their looks – is this a suggestion or a command? Command. Is it wajib or mustahab? Wajib
2) Guard their private parts – when praying, need to cover some parts or in front of others
3) Where does it say to cover hair?

What comes to mind when hearing the following words?

- Jeans
    - All the way to ankles. No one thinks anything shorter.
- Hat
    - Covers the head
- Socks
    - Does anybody think about something that just covers toes or two toes? At least up to the ankle.

Scarf comes from *khimar* – at that time it had a certain meaning. How do we find out the meaning of the word at that time? Look for other books that have that word and find the context.
At the time of the Quran, what was the most common form of literature? Poetry.

Paper: "Investigating the Theory of Minimal Hijab about Coverage in the Age of Ignorance in Early Islam"
It includes an example of poetry that was in the *jahili* period (before Islam). If you look at the context of it, it's praising these women who wouldn't let their *khimar* slip off. There are three examples here from different poems and all of them are basically saying this is not a new word. It's a word that was very well known and had a certain meaning – it means something that covers your hair.
Another way is to look at how the people who were around at that time, how did they understand the verse? For centuries and centuries, it was crystal clear to them that what was meant is something that covers your hair. Only recently, in the last 100 years, did people start saying it was something else.
Why would Allah tell the Prophet to tell the women to cover the neck area here? Because the women would tie their scarves in the back and leave the neck area exposed.
Principle in Islamic law: if you can get to the same conclusion in a different way, that's okay. For example, you can use another scarf to cover the neck area.
It's historically documented that it means something that covers your hair. Women were already covering their hair, but also you should cover this part as well. Who are the exceptions? Husbands, fathers, own sons, and so on.
Verse 2: 33:59: "O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw closely over themselves their chadors [when going out]. That makes it likely for them to be recognized and not be troubled, and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful."
Chador (English meaning): something that covers the body.
How does this scholar know that *jilbab* means a chador? Same methods as previously mentioned.
For every Islamic law, you have 2 causes:

1) The proof/ evidence
2) Wisdom (hikmah)/ philosophy

When it comes to hijab, what would be used by Islamic scholars of law as evidence? The verses we mentioned above.
What about the wisdom?
Allowing women to be involved in society without being judged by their looks. Could verse 33:59 be used for this as well? Yes, it talks about both the evidence and philosophy. You should wear it so people who have bad intentions don't bother you.
Remember the verse about fasting: "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you so that you may achieve taqwa". This verse shows both the evidence and wisdom.

Scenario 3

I'm a woman with a black belt and can fully take care of myself. I can teach people who mess with me a lesson, so I don't need to cover myself.
Answer: It's a command from Allah; you need to follow it no matter what. It's not only a means of covering yourself. People also respect you.
Example: It's very important for you guys to not eat too much candy so that your teeth don't rot. Let's say someone has super good teeth and no matter what they eat, they never get cavities. Does that mean that this request that I made for you not to eat candies is invalid? No, there could be other reasons I said it as well. For example, let's say I'm a doctor

and you need to eat a diet that's rich with fiber. Or let's say I'm your coach and you need to work on strength training, so I tell you not to eat candy so you can eat other stuff.
Allah mentions one reason for hijab but doesn't say that's the only reason.
Student Question: What if being seen in hijab in some places is dangerous for you?
Answer: There are some places where if you wear the hijab and are recognized as a Muslim, that's not a good thing. For example, in a state like Alabama or Missisipi (very racist states), that may be dangerous for you. If you go to certain neighbourhoods in Europe or Israel with a hijab, it may be very dangerous for you.
First of all, why would you want to go to a place where people are so sick and twisted and racist that they don't have the respect for women's right to cover themselves? Why would you go there?
Let's say that you get sick somewhere in Europe and you have to go to a hospital where if you go there, there's a serious threat to your life, is it wajib to wear the hijab? No. If there's another way, you can go to another hospital or can avoid it, then try that way. Islam is a flexible religion.
Let's say someone says I want to go to downtown Toronto to see the fireworks and I'm scared of someone calling me raghead, so I'm not going to wear my hijab. Is that a valid excuse?

a) It's not something critical for you to go see the fireworks. You can watch them on TV or go to Brampton where everyone is brown.
b) It's a perceived threat – it's not something legit. This is Toronto.
c) Name calling is not a really big threat – only if harm to self or property.

Student Question: Can't we argue that we can get the same amount of respect whether we're wearing hijab or not?
You can be dressed modestly, but there's a certain identity you take on when wearing hijab. Also, when you say modestly, what does that actually mean? For one person, it can mean up to here, up to there, one day up to here, another changes, etc. What ends up happening is you become your own god, because you're setting your own definition. You say I'm not going to go by the word of God but will assign my own limits.
Let's say you go to a business meeting (any type of corporate setting, you work in a company, etc.), the first thing people typically do is shake hands. You have to decide for yourself what you're going to do. You can put your hand on your chest and say this is how I shake hands or say we don't make physical contact with those who are not close family members. You're saying you're not going to be like everyone else – that you will follow your own standards.
When people typically go for dinner, they drink alcohol. Then you're setting another thing – you won't go to those restaurants.
Dress will be another thing – am I going to be someone who is trying to fit in or will I have my own conduct? You need to decide where you will stand.
Other than the 2 verses, there are a number of *ahadith* that describe the limits of hijab.
Al-Fudayl (a companion of Imam as-Sadiq(as)) says, "I asked the Imam about a lady's forearms – are they considered amongst the adornments for which Allah says in the Quran, 'And they should not expose their adornment except for their husbands?" He (a) said, "Yes, and what ever is covered under the head scarf is part of her adornment [and it has to be

covered], and whatever is above the wrists [is also from her adornment and should be covered]." (al-Wasail v. 20 p. 200)
Scholars consider this hadith to be authentic – something that is a proper hadith.

Video: Modest Fashion

Some Muslims say hijab is not Islamic. Others take a different approach. What approach is being taken in this video? Do you see any problematic statements in this video? Are you proud of the way they're presenting hijab here or do you feel there are some issues?
They're treating hijab like a fashion statement. Today, my fashion is hijab but tomorrow it might not be. It's their choice.
Quotes from the video:

a) "If a woman decides to go half-naked, she might feel liberated, she might feel confident…**and it's the same thing with covering up**."

Problem: the most important thing is how you feel. That's not at all the Islamic perspective. I'm the slave of God. I'm looking to God to understand how I should be.

b) "With time and also with the younger generation it turned into a **fashion statement**."

Problem: Is hijab about fashion? Is there a difference between dressing fashionably and making a statement? You can dress neatly, smartly, in a presentable, clean way, nice colours, etc. There's another time where you're trying to make a fashion statement, which goes against the philosophy of hijab. You're supposed to interact with the opposite gender without bringing attention.

c) "Humans should have the right and freedom **to express themselves**."

Problem: There are limits to all forms of expression. When it comes to our tongue, you can't backbite. If you want to show your beauty, you can show it through beauty of speech or beauty of conduct.
Let's say I want to be completely free, say whatever I want to say, eat whatever I want to eat, you might think that's freedom, but it's slavery to your lower desires.
What the video tells us:

- Wear hijab if that's your fashion statement
- Wear it however you find fashionable (half hijab, make up, half sleeves, burka)
- If it's not your fashion statement, no problem! (But just make sure you're fashionable)

Back to the verses: We talked about 2 verses that are used as evidence for hijab: 24:33, 33:59. Of the two, the one that is used primarily is 22:33 (one with *khimar*); the other one is secondary. The first one gives more detail.
One of the attacks by modern/ feminists/ liberal Muslims is they come and focus on verse 33:59 and ignore the other one and ignore *ahadith*. First of all, they say who says *jilbab* means *chador,* or a cloth that covers your whole body? It basically means a garment. What do you think the answer to that would be?
If you go right now and study ancient Roman texts, my professor spent many months writing papers on this one word in Homer and the Odyssey. That's what a scholar does. In one of the talks online by one of these revisionist Muslims, she looks at the modern

dictionary that *jilbab* means garment and not a long cloth. There is poetry, old dictionaries, texts that talk about this. Go study them.
Then she says this verse is talking about a specific event. In the old days, the washroom facilities were separate from the homes. And in Medina, the Muslim women had to go to these places at night time and sometimes they would go and wouldn't have a proper garment on them and it was unsafe for them. So the Prophet was told to tell them when you go, make sure you cover properly. And that's how the story goes.
She says first of all, we're not in Medina, our washrooms are in our homes, and there are other ways of being safe. So therefore, this verse is not valid and we're going to eliminate it.
When Allah addresses something to the Prophet, it's for all times.
How do you know Allah wouldn't want to limit something to that point?
Because the Quran is supposed to be for all times – it's a guidance for people. Here, first of all, there is nothing in the verse that talks about Medina, some context or a certain time period. Quran is a book of guidance and for all times. Secondly, it would mean the Quran is not relevant and that's not how we're told to treat the Quran. Also, the Quran is 100% true. Sometimes stories might come up that are not true. Of all the *ahadith* we have, those *ahadith* that talk about the occasion of the revelation of verses tend to be the weakest of verses. The idea that you make a verse irrelevant because of a story is really problematic. It ignores the other verse of the Quran and is limiting the verse.
To summarize: First, we spoke about trying to be someone who sees the positive in things. Try to be a positive-thinking person. Secondly, we looked at this idea of evidence vs wisdom. We looked at the idea of how do you know what to do? Either you're an expert or you follow an expert. And then we talked about the evidence of hijab; one is a primary verse and another a secondary. Then we talked about the meanings of the words and what others say about hijab – the problematic things.
Question: Why do people want to attack hijab?
Answer: One of them is to be respected as a Muslim and I don't want to admit that I'm doing something wrong. I don't want to think about the fact that I will be asked on the Day of Judgment and will be punished. So instead I will say you're all wrong. Another reason is because the West hates when Muslims practice their religion. The West would love if Muslims did three things: stop talking about Palestine, give up hijab, and accept alternatives to traditional family composition. They know these things would lead to the breakdown of religion altogether.

Lesson 29- Hijab: Evidence and Philosophy

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Hijab

In this lesson, we will learn a bit about the evidence (Daleel / `Illah) behind the command for Hijab, and the philosophy behind Hijab.

Evidence for Hijab

Common sense dictates that in order to find answers to questions that require expertise, one either needs to be an expert in the subject related to the question, or to refer to an expert who is an expert on the subject in order to arrive at an answer.

The process of Ijtihad, or deriving Islamic Law is a complicated process. Performing this correctly requires years of study and mastery of many

different subjects. It also requires a high level of *taqwa* in order to ensure that the results are fair and not motivated with personal bias.

Understanding all the evidence behind all the rules of Hijab is therefore something for an expert to research. But let us take a look at a few verses of the Qur'an and traditions that Mujtahids use in order to understand the necessity of Hijab.

Verses of the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, Allah command the Prophet (s), "Say to the believing men that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste). This is better for them." (An-Noor 24:30)

This is a command to Muslim men that they should not lustfully look at women (other than their own wives); and in order to prevent any possibility of temptation, they are required to cast away their glances.

Then in the next verse, Allah commands the Prophet to address the women: "Say to the believing women that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste)…" (24:31) This is a similar command as given to the men in the previous verse regarding controlling one's glance.

After this, the Qur'an describes the dress code for women: "...and not display their beauty except what is apparent, and they should place their *Khumur* over their chest…" (24:31)

Khumur خُمُرٌis plural of khimar خِمَارٌ, which means the veil covering the head. According to the commentators of the Qur'an, the women of Medina in the pre-Islamic era used to put their khumur over the head with the two ends tucked behind and tied at the back of the neck, in the process exposing their ears and neck. By saying that, "place the khumur over the chest," Almighty Allah ordered the women to a) wear a head covering and b) not let the chest area be exposed, by covering it with their scarf. (Note that jurists explain that it can be covered by some other clothing as well).

In the Qur'an, Allah commands the Prophet (s), "O Prophet! Say to your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers that: they should let down

upon themselves their *Jalabeeb*." (al-Ahzab 33:59)

Jalabeeb جَلاَبِيْبٌis the plural of Jilbab جِلْبَابٌ, which means a loose outer garment. This means that the Islamic dress code for women does not only consist of a scarf; it also includes the overall dress that should cover the body as whole.

Tradition
Al-Fudayl (a companion of Imam as-Sadiq (a)) says, "I asked the Imam about a lady's forearms - are they considered amongst the adornment for which Allah says in the Qur'an, 'And they should not expose their adornment except for their husbands?'" He (a) said, "Yes, and what ever is covered under the head scarf is part of her adornment [and it has to be covered], and whatever is above the wrists [is also from her adornment and should be covered]." (al-Wasail v. 20 p. 200)

Fiqh:
25-26: Philosophy of Jurisprudential Rules
27-29: Hijab: Challenges, Evidence and Philosophy

Philosophy Behind Hijab

- Hijab is not simply a matter of clothing. It literally means 'barrier.' The purpose of Hijab is to protection of the society from corruption. It offers a way for men and women to interact in a safe environment on the basis of respect. The modest clothing that the Hijab defines, the command to control one's glance, and the Islamic modest code of conduct (Iffah), creates a "barrier of modesty" as opposed to allowing uncontrolled interaction.

Questions for Review

- What is the meaning of Hijab?
- On the basis of the verses of Qur'an presented in this lesson, does the Qur'an introduce the Hijab as a new concept that didn't exist prior to Islam? Or does it guide Muslims on the correct way to implement a dress code that already was in place?
- Read the article, Hijab and Family Life, https://www.al-islam.org/message-thaqalayn/vol11-n4-2011/hijab-and-family-life-mohammad-ali-shomali/hijab-and-family-life. On the basis of its content, present other philosophies of hijab.

Grade 11

Stream: Fiqh and Akhlaq

Lesson Sequence: 30-32

Fiqh

30-32: Interactive Session

Lesson 30-32- Fiqh: Interactive Session

Please use the following powerpoint presentation to teach the next three lessons. This is an interactive session on some common Fiqh rules.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11j4dnTykUUXpVe8jUQ2K44RRlfPNfO3r/view?usp=sharing